

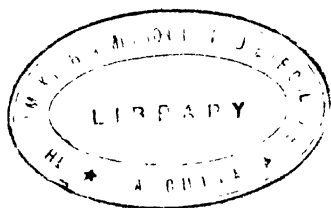
The Ramakrishna Mission  
Institute of Culture Library

Presented by

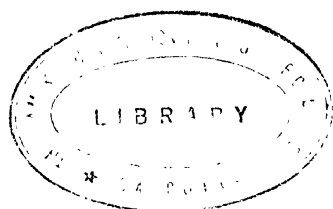
*Dr. Sarat Chandra Mukherjee*

RMICOL-8

3856











THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE EAST DESCRIBED AND EXAMINED.

## HINDU SERIES.

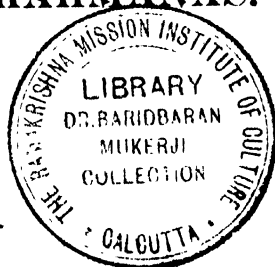
FIRST VOLUME.

### THE VEDAS AND BRAHMANAS.

THE RIG-VEDA.

THE ATHARVA-VEDA.

THE BRAHMANAS OF THE VEDAS.



THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA :  
LONDON AND MADRAS.

1898.



AN  
ACCOUNT OF THE VEDAS;  
WITH  
NUMEROUS EXTRACTS  
FROM  
THE RIG-VEDA.

*[The most important Hymns are quoted in full; extracts are also  
given from the Brahmanas, and the claims of the Arya  
Samaj are considered in an Appendix.]*

~~~~~  
SECOND EDITION, 3,000—TOTAL COPIES, 6,000.  
~~~~~

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA :  
LONDON AND MADRAS.

1897.

R.M. J. GARY	
Ac	2350
Ch	294 10
	JED
	✓
Can	✓
Bk	✓
Check	✓

## PREFATORY NOTE.

---

THE following compilation is a greatly enlarged edition of *Vedic Hinduism*, published in 1888. Since then the translation of the Rig-Veda by Mr. R. T. B. Griffith, has been completed, and through the kindness of the author a free use of the work has been allowed. It is strongly recommended to the student of the subject.

The Sanskrit Text, with Sayana's Commentary, edited by Max Müller, can now be obtained for £8-8s. Though it should be carefully studied by competent scholars, few are able to do so, and the work is expensive. The translation of Mr. Griffith gives a fair idea of the contents, and the Commentary often throws great light on the text.

Next to the above, Dr. John Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, in five Volumes, will be found of special value. Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., Publishers.

The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald's *Vedic Religion*, contains much valuable information. It may be obtained at the principal Tract Depôts in India.

The compiler is also indebted to the following works :

*Arya Samaj, Principles and Teachings of the.* A Series of Lectures by Pandit Kharak Singh and Dr. Martyn Clark. The Punjab Religious Book Society, Lahore.

Banerjea, Rev. Dr. K. M. *The Relation of Christianity and Hinduism.*

Barth, *Religions of India.* Trübner's Oriental Series.

Dowson, *Dictionary of Hindu Mythology.* Trübner's Oriental Series.

Eggeling, Professor. *Translation of the Satapatha Brahmana.* Sacred Books of the East.

Forman, Rev. H. *The Arya Samaj.* North India Tract Society, Allahabad.

Haug, Dr. *Translation of the Aitareya Brahmanam.* Bombay.

Kunte, Mr. M. M., B.A. *Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization in India.* Bombay.

Müller, Professor Max, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature, Hibbert Lectures, &c. &c.*

Rajendralala Mitra, Dr. *Indo-Aryans*. 2 Vols. Newman, Calcutta.  
Weber, Professor, *History of Indian Literature*. Trübner.  
Whitney, Professor. *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*. Scribner.  
Williams, Sir Monier, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*. Murray 18s.  
Wilson, Professor H. H. *Translation of the Rig-Veda Samhita*.  
Allen.

Wilson, Rev. Dr. J. *India Three Thousand Years Ago*. Bombay.

References are given to the longer quotations, but there are numerous short extracts, generally abridged or slightly altered, which are not acknowledged.

The reader is earnestly invited to investigate the subject for himself, and consider how far the Vedic hymns and Brahmanas meet the wants of the soul. The concluding appeal of the late Rev. Dr. Krishna Mohan Banerjea deserves special attention.

J. MURDOCH.

MADRAS, October, 1892.

# CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION...	1
METRES AND LANGUAGE OF THE VEDAS ...	3
PRINCIPAL DIVISIONS OF THE VEDAS ...	7
BRAHMANAS ...	10
THE ARANYAKAS AND UPANISHADS...	11
THE SUTRAS ...	12
HINDU ACCOUNTS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE VEDAS ...	13
THE TIME WHEN THE VEDAS WERE COMPOSED ...	20
THE VEDAS AT FIRST HANDED DOWN BY TRADITION ...	21
SOCIAL LIFE IN VEDIC TIMES...	23
THE GODS OF THE VEDAS ...	30
The Religious Childhood of India, 30 ; Dyaus and Prithivi, 32 ; Aditi and the Adityas, 33 ; Varuna, 34 ; Indra, 35 ; Agni, 37 ; Parjanya, 38 ; Vayu, 39 ; The Maruts, 39 ; Solar Deities, 40 ; Mitra, 41 ; Surya, 41 ; Savitri, 41 ; Vishnu, 42 ; Pushan, 43 ; Ushas, 43 ; Asvins, 44 ; Tvashtri, 44 ; The Ribhus, 44 ; Vishvakarman, 45 ; Prajapati, 45 ; Brihaspati or Brahmanaspati, 45 ; Vach, 46 ; Soma, 46 ; Rudra, 47 ; Yama and Yami, 48 ; Visve Devas, 48 ; Ka, 49 ; Goddesses, 49 ; The Pitris, 49 ; Sacrificial Implements, &c., 52 ; The Gods not mentioned in the Vedas, 52.	
THE OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES OF THE VEDAS ...	53
SOMA ...	56
ANIMAL SACRIFICES ...	57
PURUSHAMEDHA, HUMAN SACRIFICES ...	60
REACTION AGAINST SACRIFICES ...	65
SUMMARY OF THE BOOKS ...	67
ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACTS FROM THE RIG-VEDA ...	67
Mandala I. 67 ; Mandala II. 76 ; Mandala III. 78 ; Mandala IV. 81 ; Mandala V. 83 ; Mandala VI. 86 ; Mandala VII. 88 ; Mandala VIII. 94 ; Mandala IX. 95 ; Mandala X. 97.	



	<i>Page</i>
THE SAMA VEDA ... ..	108
ATHARVA VEDA ... ..	109
THE BRAHMANAS ... ..	109
REVIEW ... ..	115
THE RELIGION OF THE VEDAS POLYTHEISTIC ... ..	115
CHARACTER OF THE VEDIC GODS... ..	119
THE RELATION OF THE WORSHIPPERS TO THE GODS ... ..	120
THE PRAYERS OF THE VEDAS ... ..	122
ARE THE VEDAS A DIVINE REVELATION ? ... ..	127
A RETURN TO VEDIC HINDUISM IMPOSSIBLE ... ..	138
A NATIONAL RELIGION ... ..	139
A RELIGION WORTHY OF ACCEPTANCE ... ..	140
<b>APPENDIX</b>	
THE ARYA SAMAJ ... ..	144
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS ... ..	155

# THE RIG-VEDA.

WITH

## ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACTS.

### INTRODUCTION.

**Object.**—The following compilation is intended chiefly for thoughtful Hindus. They are sufficiently intelligent to reject the low and degrading ideas of God given in the later Hindu books; but some of them have the idea that a pure monotheism is to be found in the Vedas, the most ancient and authoritative of their sacred writings. Careful examination will show that this belief is unfounded. The inquiry should be conducted with great seriousness, and an earnest desire to know the truth. The following short prayer may fitly be offered :

*O All-wise, All-merciful God and Father, pour the bright beams of Thy light into my soul, and guide me into Thy eternal truth.*

**Meaning of Term.**—VEDA is from the Sanskrit *vid*, ‘know,’ kindred with the Latin *vid*, and the English *to wit*. In its general sense it is sometimes applied by the Brahmans to the whole body of their most ancient sacred literature. More strictly it denotes four collections of hymns, which are respectively known by the names of Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, and Atharva-Veda. They are supposed to contain the science, as teaching that knowledge which, of all others, is best worth acquiring.

“The general form of the Vedas is that of lyric poetry. They contain the songs in which the first ancestors of the Hindu people, at the very dawn of their existence as a separate nation, while they were still only on the threshold of the great country which they were afterwards to fill with their civilization, praised the gods, extolled heroic deeds, and sung of other matters which kindled their poetical fervour.”\*

**The Vedas the highest Hindu Authorities.**—The Hindu sacred books are divided into two great classes, called *Sruti* and *Smriti*. *Sruti*, which means hearing, denotes direct revelation; *Smriti*, recollection, includes the sacred books which are admitted to have been composed by human authors.

Professor Max Müller thus shows the estimation in which the Vedas are held :

“According to the orthodox views of Indian theologians, not a single line of the Veda was the work of human authors. The whole Veda is in

\* Whitney's *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, Vol. I., p. 5.

some way or other the work of the Deity, and even those who receive the revelation, or, as they express it, those who saw it, were not supposed to be ordinary mortals, but beings raised above the level of common humanity, and less liable therefore to error in the reception of revealed truth. . . . The human element, called *pauruṣheyatva* in Sanskrit, is drawn out of every corner or hiding-place, and as the Veda is held to have existed in the mind of the Deity before the beginning of time, every allusion to historical events, of which there are not a few, is explained away with a zeal and ingenuity worthy of a better cause."

"The laws of Manu, according to the Brahmanic theology, are not revelation; they are not *Sruti*, but only *Smṛiti*. If these laws or any other work of authority can be proved on any point to be at variance with a single passage of the Veda, their authority is at once overruled."

The inspiration of the Veda, says Monier Williams, is regarded as so self-convincing, "as to require no proof, and to be entirely beyond the province of reason or argument."

**Hindu ignorance of the Vedas.**—Although the Vedas are held in the highest estimation by the Hindus, their real character is almost entirely unknown to them. Very few copies of them existed until they were printed in Europe. It has often been said that if the Vedic Aryans were to reappear and act before their descendants their former life, they would be regarded with horror as a most impure and irreligious people. They killed cows and ate their flesh!

The later books were studied by the learned in India instead of the Vedas themselves. "When Rammohun Roy was in London," says Max Müller, "he saw at the British Museum a young German scholar, Friedrich Rosen, busily engaged in copying MSS. of the Rig-Veda. The Raja was surprised, but he told Rosen that he ought not to waste his time on the Hymns, but that he should study the text of the Upanishads."†

**Publication of the Vedas.**—For a long time it was very difficult for European scholars to gain a knowledge of the Veda. "All other Sanskrit MSS. were freely communicated to Englishmen resident in India, but not the MSS. of the Veda. And even in cases where such MSS. had fallen into the hands of barbarians, the Pandits declined to translate them for them. Colebrooke alone seems to have overcome all these difficulties, and his Essays 'On the Vedas, or the Sacred Writings of the Hindus,' though published in 1805, are still extremely valuable."

Rosen published a specimen of the Hymns of the Rig-Veda in 1830. He died soon after, and only the first book of the Rig-Veda translated into Latin, was finished by him, and published after his death in 1838.

In 1845 Max Müller was in Paris, copying the text of the Rig-Veda with the commentary of Sayana Acharya. Sayana was brother of Madhavacharya, the prime minister of the Raja of

\* *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I. Max Müller, *Biographical Essays*, p. 39.

Vijayanagara,\* in the 14th century. His commentary was, no doubt, prepared with the assistance of the most learned Brahmans of the time. Max Müller was authorised by the East India Company to bring out an edition of both at its expense. The first volume appeared in 1849. The editing occupied about 20 years. The price of the 6 quarto volumes is £15.

A new edition, in 4 volumes, at the expense of the Maharaja of Vizianagram, has lately been published. The price is 2 guineas per volume.

The text of the Rig-Veda, in Roman character, was printed in Berlin in 1861.

An English translation of the Rig-Veda, based on the commentary of Sayana, was prepared by the late Professor Wilson. Part of it was published after his death. It is expensive, the price of the 6 volumes being £6-19s.

There is a new English translation by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith, formerly Principal of the Sanskrit College, Benares. A popular commentary is also given, explaining, as far as possible, difficult passages. The opinions of Sayana, Max Müller, Muir, and other oriental scholars are quoted, where they throw light on the subject, in addition to valuable original notes. The translator has had the advantage of the labours of his predecessors, and of a long residence at Benares in close connection with some of the best Pandits in India. He is also a poet, and has sought, as far as possible, to imitate the rhythm of the original. Second Edition in two volumes, Rs. 14; postage 12 As.

All students who can afford it should possess copies of this recent and accurate translation of the Vedas. It should be accessible in all Public and Mission Libraries in India.

A translation by Max Müller, entitled *Vedic Hymns*, is in course of Publication in *The Sacred Books of the East*.

Some of the Hymns have been translated by Professor Peterson of Bombay. Bengali translations of the Rig-Veda have been published.

#### MEETRES AND LANGUAGE OF THE VEDAS.

**Metres.**—Great importance is attached to the Metres used. Dr. Haug says :—

“The power and significance of the Hotri-priests at a sacrifice consists in their being the masters of the sacred word, which is frequently personified by *Vach*, i. e., Speech, who is identical with *Sarasvati*, the goddess of learning in the later Hindu Pantheon. Speech has, according to the opinion of the earliest divines, the power of vivifying and killing. The sacred words pronounced by the Hotar effect, by dint of the innate power of *Vach*, the spiritual birth of the sacrificer, form his body, raise him up to heaven, connect him with the prototypes of those things which

---

\*In what is now the Bellary District of the Madras Presidency. The ruins over 2 s quare miles.

he wishes to obtain (such as children, cattle, &c.,) and make him attain to his full life term, which is a hundred years; but they are at the same time a weapon by means of which the sacrificer's enemies, or he himself (if the Hotar have any evil designs against him) can be killed, and all the evil consequences of sin (this is termed *paṃman*) be destroyed. The power and effect of Speech as regards the obtaining of any particular thing wished for, mainly lies in the form in which it is uttered. Thence the great importance of the metres, and the choice of words and terms. Each metre is the invisible master of something obtainable in this world; it is, as it were, its exponent, and ideal. This great significance of the metrical speech is derived from the number of syllables of which it consists; for each thing has (just as in the Pythagorean system) a certain numerical proportion. The Gayatri metre, which consists of three times eight syllables, is the most sacred, and is the proper metre for Agni, the god of fire, and chaplain of the gods. It expresses the idea of Brahma: therefore the sacrificer must use it when he wishes anything closely connected with Brahma, such as acquirement of sacred knowledge, and the thorough understanding of all problems of theology. The Trishtubh, which consists of four times eleven syllables, expresses the idea of strength and royal power; thence it is the proper metre by which Indra, the king of the gods, is to be invoked. Any one wishing to obtain strength and royal power, principally a Kshatriya, must use it. A variety of it, the Ushnih metre of 28 syllables, is to be employed by a sacrificer who aspires for longevity, for 28 is the symbol of life. The Jagati, a metre of 48 syllables, expresses the idea of cattle. Any one who wishes for wealth in cattle, must use it. The same idea (or that of the sacrifice) is expressed by the Paṅkti metre (five times eight syllables). The Brihati, which consists of 36 syllables, is to be used when a sacrificer is aspiring to fame and renown; for this metre is the exponent of those ideas. The Anushtubh metre, of 32 syllables, is the symbol of the celestial world; thence a candidate for a place in heaven has to use it. The Viraj, of 30 syllables, is food and satisfaction; thence one who wishes for plenty of food, must employ it." \*

One or two illustrative quotations are given below from the Aitareya Brahmana:

"He who wishes for long life, should use two verses in the Ushnih metre; for Ushnih is life. He who having such a knowledge uses two Ushnihs arrives at his full age (*i. e.*, 100 years).

"He who desires heaven should use two Anushtubhs. There are 64 syllables in two Anushtubhs. Each of these three worlds (earth, air, and sky) contains 21 places, one rising above the other (just as the steps of a ladder). By 21 steps he ascends to each of these worlds severally; by taking the sixty-fourth step he stands firm in the celestial world. He who having such a knowledge uses two Anushtubhs gains a footing (in the celestial world).

"He who desires strength should use two Trishtubhs. Trishtubh is strength, vigour, and sharpness of senses. He who knowing this, uses

\* Introduction to the Aitareya Brahmana, pp. 75-77.

two *Trishtubhs*, becomes vigorous, endowed with sharp senses and strong.

"He who desires cattle should use two *Jagatis*. Cattle are *Jagati* like. He who knowing this uses two *Jagatis*, becomes rich in cattle,"\*

"The metres," says Max Müller, "were originally connected with dancing and music. The names for metre in general confirm this. *Ohandas*, metre, denotes stepping; *vritta*, metre from *vrit*, to turn, meant originally the last three or four steps of a dancing movement, to turn, the *versus* which determined the whole character of a dance and of a metre. *Trishtubh*, the name of a common metre in the Veda, meant three steps, because its turn, its *vritta*, or *versus*, consisted of three steps, one short and two long.

"The laws regulating the succession of long and short syllables within the limits of the hemistich are in general anything but strict; all that is aimed at seems to be to give the whole a kind of rhythmical flow, or general metrical movement, on which the four last syllables shall stamp the peculiar character; their quantity is much more definitely established, yet even among them exceptional irregularities are by no means rare."

Griffith thus briefly describes the metres:

"The Hymns are composed in various metres, some of which are exceedingly simple and others comparatively complex and elaborate, and two or more different metres are frequently found in the same Hymn; the Hymn, for instance, in Book I., shows nine distinct varieties in the same number of verses. The verses or stanzas consist of three or four *pādas*, semi-hemistichs† or lines, each of which contains 8, 11, or 12 syllables, sometimes, but rarely, 5, and still less frequently four or more than twelve. As regards quantity, the first syllables of the line are not strictly defined, but the last four are regular, the measure being iambic (short and long) in the 8 and 12 syllable verses, and trochaic (long and short) in these of 11 syllables."‡

### *Specimens of Metres.*

**The Gayatri.**—This is a common metre. It is so called because the *Gayatri*, the most sacred text in the Vedas, is composed in it. It contains three times eight syllables. The first hymn is in this metre. The following is the first verse:

Agnimilē purōhitam yajñasya dēva mṛtvijam |  
Hotaram ratnadhatamam ||

I laud Agni, the great high priest, god, minister of sacrifice,  
The herald, lavishest of wealth.

**Trishtubh.**—This is one of the commonest metres. It consists

\* Haug's Translation, pp. 12, 13.

† Hemistich, half line.

‡ Preface to Translation, pp. xv, xvi.

of four times eleven syllables. The name means three steps, one short and two long. The following is an example:

Anárambhanetad avírayethám anástbháne agrabhane samudre |  
yad ásvíná bhuthur Bhujyum astam átáritráam návam átasthiv-  
áñsam | i. 116, 5.

5. Ye put forth your vigour in the ocean, which offers no stay or standing-place, or support, when ye bore Bhujyu to his home standing on a ship propelled by a hundred oars."\*

**Anushtubh.**—This contains 32 syllables. A candidate for a place in heaven has to use it. The following is an example:

Srushtváno hi dásushe deváh Agne vichetasah !  
tán rohidaśva girvanas trayastrimsatam á vaha ! i. 45, 2.

"Agni, the wise gods lend an ear to their worshipper. God with the ruddy steeds, who lovest praise, bring hither those three and thirty."†

**Jagati.**—This metre of 48 syllables is said to "express the idea of cattle. Any one who wishes for wealth in cattle must use it." Example:

Na tam rájánáv Adite kutaś chana na ambah ánoti duritam  
nakir bhayam | Yam Ásvíná suhavá rudravarttaní purora-  
tham krínuthah patnyá saha | x. 39, 11.

"Neither distress, nor calamity, nor fear from any quarter assails the man whom ye Asvins, along with (your) wife, cause to lead the van in his car; and as loving to ascend their chariot."‡

Max Müller gives a list, according to Saunaka, of the metres employed in the Rig-Veda. The number of verses in which the principal occur are as follows: Trishtubh, 4,253; Gayatri, 2,451; Jagati, 1,348; Anushtubh, 855; Ushnih, 341; Pankti, 312; various, 849; total, 10,409.§

Every intelligent man knows that the above assertions regarding the influence of metres is pure nonsense. Like the curse denounced against those who read the Vedas, it was a device of the Brahmans to impose upon the simple-minded people of the time.

**Language.**—The language of the Vedas is an older dialect, varying very considerably, both in its grammatical and lexical character, from the classical Sanskrit. Its grammatical peculiarities run through all departments. It is untrammelled by the rules by which Sanskrit after it passed into oblivion as a vernacular dialect was forced, as it were, into a mould of regularity by long grammatical treatment, and received a development which is in some respect foreign and unnatural. The dissimilarity between the two in respect of the stock of words of which each is made up is not less marked. Not single words alone, but whole classes of derivatives

\* Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V. pp. 244, 245.

† Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V. p. 10.

‡ Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V. p. 236.

§ Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 222.

and roots, which the Veda exhibits in familiar use, are wholly wanting, or have left but faint traces in the classical dialect.\*

All living languages change in course of time. The following is a specimen of English from Chaucer, considered the "Father of English poetry;" written about 500 years ago :

" A Clerk ther was of Oxenforde also,  
That unto logike hadde long ygo.  
As lene was his hors as is a rake.  
And he was not right fat I undertake;  
But looked holwe, and thereto soberly.

The hymns of the Rig-Veda were undoubtedly composed in the language of the time. As the people of Italy who once spoke Latin, now speak Italian, derived from Latin, so in India, Sanskrit merged into what are called the Prakrits. In the time of Buddha, about 500 B. C., Sanskrit had ceased to be *spoken* language. But it became a *written* language, polished by grammarians, and during the last 2,000 years it has remained substantially the same.

Muir gives examples of the differences of Vedic from later Sanskrit, one of which is quoted. Rig-Veda I. 2, 1.

*Vedic Text.*

Vāyav āyāhi darśata ime somāḥ arankṛitāḥ |  
teshām pāhi śrudhi havam ||

*Modern Sanskrit.*

Vāyav āyāhi darśanīya ime somāḥ arankṛitāḥ |  
teshām piba śṛṇu havam ||

"Come, O Vayu, these somas are prepared. Drink of them; hear our invocation."

Here it will be observed that four Vedic words darśata, arankṛitāḥ, pāhi, śrudhi, differ from the modern Sanskrit forms. The frequent diversity between the Vedic and ordinary Sanskrit is recognized in every page of his work by the great grammarian Pāṇini.†

#### PRINCIPAL DIVISIONS OF THE VEDAS.

RIG-VEDA.—The name means the Veda of hymns of praise. *Rich*, which before the initial soft letter of Veda, is changed into *Rig*, is derived from a root which in Sanskrit means to celebrate. When standing by itself, *rich* becomes *rik*.

The hymns are called *Mantras* or *Suktas* (praises). The entire number form the *Sanhita* (or *Samhita*) collection. They are arranged in two methods. One divides them amongst eight *Chandas* (portions), or *Astakas* (eighths), each of which is again divided into eight *Adhyayas*, lectures. The other plan classes

bridged from Whitney. † Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. II. pp. 205, 206.



**SAMA-VEDA.**—This is wholly metrical. It contains 1549 verses, only 78 of which have not been traced to the Rig-Veda. The verses have been selected and arranged for the purpose of being chanted at the sacrifices of which the intoxicating juice of the Soma plant was the chief ingredient. Many of the invocations are addressed to Soma, some to Agni, and some to Indra. There are special song books directing the manner in which they were to be intoned. The priests who recited the Sama-Veda were called Udgatris, chanters.

The text has been printed and there is an English translation by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith, published by Lazarus & Co., Benares. Price Rs. 4 cloth; Rs. 3½ paper cover.

**ATHARVA-VEDA.**—This Veda is of later origin than the others. Manu speaks of only the Three Vedas. One-sixth of the work is in prose, and about one-sixth of the hymns is found in the Rig-Veda.

It is sometimes called the *Cursing-Veda*, because it contains so many mantras supposed to be able to cause the destruction of enemies. A full account of it, with some illustrative extracts, are given in a separate publication.

The text has been printed, and there is an English translation by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith published by Lazarus and Co., Benares. In 2 Vols. each Rs. 6 cloth; Rs. 5½ paper covers.

### BRAHMANAS.

The BRAHMANAS, 'belonging to Brahmins,' are that part of the Veda which is intended for the guidance of Brahmins in the use of the hymns of the Mantra, and therefore of later production; but the Brahmanas, equally with the Mantra, are held to be *Śruti*, revealed word. They contain the details of the Vedic ceremonies, with long explanations of their origin and meaning; they give instructions as to the use of particular verses and metres; and they abound with curious legends, human and divine, in illustration. Though their professed object is to teach the sacrifice, they allow a much larger space to dogmatical, exegetical, mystical, and philosophical speculations than to the ceremonial itself.

Each of the Saṁhitas has its Brahmanas, and these generally maintain the essential character of the Veda to which they belong. Thus the Brahmanas of the Rik are specially devoted to the duties of the Hotri, who recites the verses, those of the Yajur to the performance of the sacrifices by the Adhvaryu, and those of the Saman to the chanting by the Udgatri. The Rik has the Aitareya Brahmana, which is perhaps the oldest, and may date as far back as the seventh century, B. C. It has another, called Kaushitaki. The Black Yajur Veda has the Taittiriya Brahmana, and the White Yajur Veda has the Satapatha Brahmana, one of the most important of all the Brahmanas. The Sama Veda has eight Brahmanas, of which one

of the best known is the Tandyā. The Atharva has only one, the Gopatha Brahmana. "The Brahmanas," says Professor Eggeling, "form our chief, if not our only, source of information regarding one of the most important periods in the social and mental development of India. They are also of the highest importance as the only genuine prose works which the Sanskrit as a popular language has produced."

The series entitled *The Sacred Books of the East Described and Examined* contains a volume on the *Brahmanas of the Vedas*,\* by the Rev. K. S. Macdonald, M. A., D. D. Author of *The Vedic Religion*. Accounts are given of the Brahmanas of the Rig-Veda, Sama Veda, Black and White Yajur Vedas and the Atharva Veda, showing the development of Hinduism. The state of society, the human, horse, and other sacrifices, the gods and religions of the Brahmanas are described, with many interesting details.

#### THE ARANYAKAS AND UPANISHADS.

Aranyaka means 'belonging to the forest.' The Aranyakas are attached to the Brahmanas, and are intended for study in the forest by Brahmanas who have retired from the world. They expound the mystical sense of the ceremonies, discuss the nature of God, &c. There are four of them extant: 1. Brihad; 2. Taittiriya; 3. Aitareya; and 4. Kaushitaki Aranyaka. The Aranyakas are closely connected with the Upanishads, and the names are occasionally used interchangeably. Thus the Brihad is called indifferently Brihad Aranyaka or Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad: it is attached to the Satapatha Brahmana. The Aitareya Upanishad is a part of the Aitareya Brahmana.

Max Müller says:—

"We cannot hesitate for a moment to consider the Aranyaka as an enlargement upon the Brahmana. The chief interest which the Aranyakas possess at the present moment consists in their philosophy. The philosophical chapters well known under the name of Upanishads are almost the only portion of Vedic literature which is extensively read to this day. They contain, or are supposed to contain, the highest authority on which the various systems of philosophy in India rest. Not only the Vedānta philosophers, who by his very name, professes his faith in the ends and objects of the Veda, but the Sankhya, the Vaisheshika, the Nyaya, and Yoga philosophers all pretend to find in the Upanishads some warranty for their tenets, however antagonistic in their bearing. The same applies to the numerous sects that have existed and still exist in India. Their founders, if they have any pretensions to orthodoxy, invariably appeal to some passage of the Upanishads in order to substantiate their own reasonings. Now it is true that in the Upanishads themselves there is so much freedom and breadth of thought that is not diffi-

\* 8vo. 232 pp. 8 As. Post-free, 10 As. Sold by Mr. A. T. Scott, Tract Depot, Adra.

cult to find in them some authority for almost any shade of philosophical opinion. The old Upanishads did not pretend to give more than 'guesses at truth,' and when, in course of time, they became invested with an inspired character, they allowed great latitude to those who professed to believe in them as revelation. Yet this was not sufficient for the rank growth of philosophical doctrines during the latter ages of Indian history; and when none of the ancient Upanishads could be found to suit the purpose, the founders of new sects had no scruple and no difficulty in composing new Upanishads of their own. This accounts for the large and even growing number of these treatises. Every new collection of MSS., every new list of Upanishads given by native writers adds to the number which were known before; and the most modern compilations seem now to enjoy the same authority as the really genuine treatises.\*

**Contradictions of the Upanishads.**—Max Müller has the following remarks on this point:

"The early Hindus did not find any difficulty in reconciling the most different and sometimes contradictory opinions in their search after truth; and a most extraordinary medley of oracular sayings might be collected from the Upanishads, even from those which are genuine and comparatively ancient, all tending to elucidate the darkest points of philosophy and religion, the creation of the world, the nature of God, the relation of man to God, and similar subjects. That one statement should be contradicted by another seems never to have been felt as any serious difficulty."†

The same remark applies to the Rig-Veda, as will be shown in the chapter describing its gods.

In the SELECTIONS FROM THE UPANISHADS, in the series *The Sacred Books of the East Described and Examined*, the Katha, Isa, and Svetasvatara Upanishads, as translated into English by Dr. Roer, are quoted in full, with the notes of Sankara Acharya and others, and there are copious extracts from the Brihad Aranya and Chhândogya Upanishads with an examination of their teaching.‡

#### THE SUTRAS.

The Sutra period forms the connecting link between the Vedic and the later Sanskrit. *Sutra* means string; and all the works written in this style, on subjects the most various, are nothing but one uninterrupted string of short sentences, twisted together into the most concise forms. Shortness is the great object of this style of composition, and it is a proverbial saying (taken from the Mahabhashya) amongst the Pandits, that an author rejoiceth in the economising of half a short vowel as much as in the birth of a son. "Every doctrine thus pouped, whether grammar, metre, law,

\* *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 316, 317.

† *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 320, 321.

‡ 8vo. 120 pp. 4 As. Post-free, 5 As. Sold by Mr. A. T. Scott, Tract Depot

or philosophy, is reduced to a mere skeleton." It is impossible to understand them without the commentary by which these works are usually accompanied.

"The Sutras" generally signify those which are connected with the Vedas, viz., the Kalpa Sutras, relating to ritual; the Grihya Sutras, to domestic rites; and the Samayacharika Sutras, to conventional usages.

The Sutras, although based upon the Sruti, are yet avowedly composed by human authors. Whenever they appear to be in contradiction with the Sruti, their authority is at once overruled.

#### THE VEDAS, THE MAIN POINT OF CONSIDERATION.

Although the different divisions of Vedic literature have been briefly described, attention will be chiefly confined to the Vedas, strictly so called.

#### HINDU ACCOUNTS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE VEDAS.

The common belief in India is that the Vedas are eternal. They existed in the mind of the Deity before the beginning of time. At the commencement of each Kalpa, Brahm reveals them to Brahma, and they issue from his four mouths. They are taught by Brahma to the Rishis whose names they bear.

The different opinions entertained regarding the origin of the Vedas will now be considered. The writings of Dr. John Muir furnish a storehouse of information on the subject. He gives the passages both in Sanskrit and in English translations. The Third Volume of his *Sanskrit Texts* treats of "The Vedas, Opinions of their Authors, and of later Indian writers of their Origin, Inspiration, and Authority." Only a few quotations can be made.

Opinions may be classed under two heads.

##### 1. Opinions expressed in the Hindu Sacred Books.

1. *The Vedas sprung from the mystical sacrifice of Purusha.*

The hymn Purusha Sukta of the Rig-Veda (x. 90) contains the following:—

तस्माद् यज्ञात् सर्वहुतः ऋचः सामानि जज्ञिरे ।

छन्दांसि जज्ञिरे तस्माद् यजुस् तस्माद् अजायत ।

"From that universal sacrifice sprung the Rich and Saman verses : the metres sprung from it : from it the Yajush arose."

2. *The Vedas were cut or scraped off from Shambha as being his hair and his mouth.*

The Atharva-Veda (x. 7, 20) says,

यस्माद् ऋचो अपातक्षन् यजुर् यस्माद् अपाकषन् ।

सामानि यस्य लोमानि अथर्वीङ्गिस्सो मुखम् ।

स्कम्मं तं ब्रूहि कतमः सिद् एव सः ।

“Declare who is that Skambha (the Supporting-Principle) from whom they cut off the Rich verses ; from whom they scraped off the Yajush, of whom the Saman verses are the hairs, and the verses of Atharva and Angiras the mouth.”

3. *The Vedas sprung from Indra, and he sprung from them.*

The Atharva-Veda (xiii. 4, 38) says,

स वै ऋग्न्यो अजायत तस्माद् ऋचो अजायन्त ।

“Indra sprung from the Rich verses ; the Rich verses sprung from him.”

4. *The Vedas sprung from Time.*

Atharva-Veda (xix. 54, 3.)

कालाद् ऋचः समभवन् यजुः कालाद् अजायत ।

“From Time the Rich verses sprung ; the Yajush sprung from Time.”

5. *The Vedas sprung from the leavings of Sacrifice.*

Atharva-Veda (xi. 7, 24.)

ऋचः सामानि छन्दासि पुराणं यजुषा सह ।

उच्छिष्टाज् जज्ञिरे सर्वे दिवि देवाः दिवि श्रिताः ।

“From the leavings of the sacrifice sprung the Rich and Saman verses, the metres, the Purana with the Yajush, and all the gods who dwell in the sky.”

6. *The Vedas were produced from Agni, Vayu and Surya. viz.*

The Chhândogya Upanishad contains the following :

प्रजापतिर् लोकान् अभ्यतपत् । तेषां तप्यमानानां रसान्

प्राबृहद् अग्निम् पृथिव्याः वायुम् अन्तरिक्षाद् आदित्यं

दिवः । स एतास् तिस्रो देवताः अभ्यतपत् । तासां

तप्यमानानां रसान् प्राबृहद् अग्नेर् ऋचो वायोर् यजूषि

साम आदित्यात् । स एतां त्रयीं विद्याम् अभ्यतपत् ।

तस्यास् तप्यमानायाः रसान् प्राबृहद् भूर् इति ऋग्न्यो

भुवर् इति यजुर्भ्यः स्वर् इति सामभ्यः ।

“Prajapati infused warmth into the worlds, and from them so heated he drew forth their essences, *viz.* Agni (fire) from the earth, Vayu (wind) from the air, and Surya (the sun) from the sky. He infused warmth into these three deities, and from them so heated he drew forth their essences,—from Agni the Rich verses, from Vayu the Yajush verses, and from Surya the Saman verses. He then infused heat into this triple science and from it so heated he drew forth its essences,—from Rich verses the syllable *bhuh*, from Yajush verses, *bhuvah*, and from Saman verses *svah*.”

Manu assigns to them the same origin.

7. *The Vedas are the breathings of the Great Being.*

Satapatha Brahmana (xiv. 5, 4, 10) :

स यथा आर्द्धेधाग्नेर् अभ्याहितात् प्रत्यग् धूमाः विनिश्चरन्ति

एवं वै अरे ऽ स्य महतो भूतस्य निश्चसितम् एतद् यद्

ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदो ऽ धर्वा ङ्गिरसः इतिहासः

पुराणं विद्या उपनिषदः श्लोकाः सूत्राण्य् अनुव्याख्यानानि

व्याख्यानानि अस्यैव एतानि सर्वाणि निश्चसितानि ।

“As from a fire made of moist wood various modifications of smoke proceed, so is the breathing of this great Being the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda, the Atharvangirases, the Itihasas, Puranas, Science, the Upanishads, Slokas, aphorisms, comments of different kinds—all these are his breathings.”

8 *The Vedas were dug by the gods out of the Mind-Ocean.*

Satapatha Brahmana (vii. 5, 2, 52).

“समुद्रे त्वा सदने सादयामि” इति । मनो वै समुद्रः ।

मनसो वै समुद्राद् वाचा ऽ भ्या देवास् त्रयीं विद्यां निरखन् ।

“Mind is the Ocean. From the mind-ocean, with speech for a shovel, the gods dug out the triple Vedic science.”

9. *The Vedas are the hair of Prajapati's beard.*

Taittiriya Brahmana, (iii. 39, 1).

प्रजापतेर् वै एतानि श्मश्रूणि यद् वेदः ।

10. *Vach (speech) is the mother of the Vedas.*

Taittiriya Brahmana (i. 8, 85).

वाग् अक्षरं प्रथमजा ऋतस्य वेदानां माता अमृतस्य नाभिः ।

“Vach is an imperishable thing and the first-born of the ceremonial, the mother of the Vedas, and the centre-point of immortality.”

11. *The Vedas issued from the mouth of Brahma.*

The Bhagavata Purana (iii. 12, 34, and 37) says:

कदाचिद् ध्यायतः सष्टरु वेदाः आसंश् चतुर्मुखात् ।

कथं स्रक्ष्याम्य अहं लोकान् समवेतान् यथापुरा ।

.....ऋग् यजुस् सामाथर्वाह्यान् वेदान् पूर्वादिभिर् मुखैः ।

शस्त्रम् इज्यां स्तुतिस्तोमं प्रायश्चित्तं व्यधात् क्रमात् ।

“Once the Vedas sprung from the four-faced Creator, as he was meditating how shall I create the aggregate worlds as before? . . . He formed from his eastern and other mouths the Vedas called Rich, Yajush, Saman and Atharvan, together with praise, sacrifice, hymns, and expiation.”

The Vishnu Purana gives the same explanation.

12. *The Vedas were produced from the Gayatri.*

Harivamsa, verse 11516.

ततो ऽ मुजद् वै त्रिपदां गायत्रीं वेदमातरम् ।

अकरोच् चैव चतुरो वेदान् गायत्रिसम्भवान् ।

After framing the world, Brahma “next created the Gayatri of three lines, mother of the Vedas, and also the four Vedas which sprung from the Gayatri.”

13. *Sarasvati was the mother of the Vedas.*

Mahabharata, Santi-parva, verses 12, 920.

वेदानां मातरं पश्य मत्स्थां देवो सरस्वतीम् ।

“Behold Sarasvati, mother of the Vedas, abiding in me.”

14. *The Vedas are Vishnu.*

Vishnu Purana, iii. 3, 19 :

स ऋक्षयः सामयः स चात्मा स यजुर्मयः ।

ऋग् यजुः साम सारात्मा स एवात्मा शरीरिणाम् ।

“He is composed of the Rich, of the Saman, of the Yajush ; he is the soul, consisting of the essence of the Rich, Yajush and Saman, he is the soul of embodied spirits.”

**2. Opinions of the Rishis with regard to the origin of the Vedic Hymns.**

The names of the authors of each hymn are preserved in the *Anukramani*, or explanatory table of contents, which has been handed down with the Veda itself, and of which the authority is unquestioned. The names of the father of the writers are often given as well as their own.

In later times when the Vedas were claimed to be eternal, it was pretended that these writers were only the Rishis by whom the hymns "were seen," or to whom they were communicated by Brahma. Of this there is not the slightest proof.

*The Rishis claim to have written the hymns themselves, just as a carpenter makes a car, &c.*

In some hymns they express no consciousness whatever of deriving assistance from any supernatural source.

Rig-Veda, i. 47, 2.

.....कण्वासो वाम् ब्रह्म कृण्वन्ति अधरे तेषां सुशृणुतं  
हवम् ।

"The Kanvas make a prayer to you: hear well their invocation."

एवा ते हरियोजन्द सुवृक्ति इन्द्र ब्रह्माणि गोतमासः अक्रन् ।

i. 64, 61. "Thus O Indra, yoker of steeds, have the Gotamas made hymns for thee efficaciously."

एतानि वाम् अश्विना वर्धनानि ब्रह्मस्तोमं गृतसमदासः अक्रन् ।

ii. 39, 8. "These magnifying prayers, [this] hymn, O Asvins, the Gritsamadas have made for you."

.....अध प्रियं शूषम् इन्द्राय मन्म ब्रह्मकृतो बृहदुक्थाद्  
अवाचि ।

x. 54, 6. "An acceptable and honorific hymn has been uttered to Indra by Vrihaduktha, maker of hymns."

सनायते गोतमः इन्द्र नव्यम् अतक्षद् ब्रह्महरियोजनाय इत्यादि ।

i. 62, 13. "Nodhas, descendant of Gotama, fashioned this new hymn for [thee] Indra."

एतं ते स्तोमं तुविजातविप्रो रथं न धीरः स्वपा अतक्षम् ।

v. 2, 11. "I, a sage, have fabricated this hymn for thee, O powerful [deity], as a skilful workman fashions a car."

अस्मै इद् उ स्तोमं संहिनोमि रथं न तष्टा इव इत्यादि ।

i. 61, 4. "To him (Indra) I send forth a hymn, as a carpenter a car."

The above are only specimens of 57 extracts given by Dr. Muir.

Some hymns ask for or acknowledge divine assistance just as poets of all nations often do. One poet says (Rig-Veda vi. 47, 10):



इन्द्र मृळं मह्यं जीषातुम् इच्छ चोदाय धियम् अयसो न  
धाराम् । यत् कञ्चि अहं त्वायुर् इदं वदामि तज् जुषस्व  
कृद्भि मा देववन्तम् ।

“O god (Indra), have mercy, give me my daily bread; sharpen my mind, like the edge of an iron instrument. Whatever I now may utter, longing for thee, do thou accept it; give me divine protection.”

स प्रतथा कविवृधाः इन्द्रो वाकस्य वक्षणिः ।

viii. 52, 4. “Indra was of old the promoter of the poet, and the augments of the song.”

Instead of the hymns being eternal, or of infinite age, many of them are spoken of as *new*, while others are of ancient date. The Rishis entertained the idea that the gods would be more highly gratified if their praises were celebrated in new, and perhaps more elaborate and beautiful compositions, than if older and possibly ruder, prayers had been repeated.

Dr. Muir gives 52 quotations under this head. Only a few need be given :

सनः स्तवानः आभर गायत्रेण नवीयसा रयिं वीरवतीम् इषम् ।

R. V. i. 12, 11. “Glorified by our newest hymn, do thou bring to us wealth and food with progeny.”

तान् पूर्वया निविदा हूमहे वयम् भगम् मित्रम् अदितिं दक्षम्  
अस्त्रिधम् इत्यादि ।

i. 89. 3. “We invoke with an ancient hymn Bhaga Mitra, &c.

यः पूर्वयामिर् उत नूतनाभिर् गोभिर् वावृधे मिणताम्  
ऋषीनाम् ।

vi. 44, 13. “He (Indra) who grew though the ancient and modern hymns of lauding Rishis.”

आ सखायः सुवर्द्धाम् धेनुम् अजध्वम् उपनव्य वचः ।

vi. 48, 11. “Friends, drive hither the milch cow with a new hymn.”

नु नव्यसे नवीयसे सूक्ताय साधय पथः प्रतवद् रोचय रचः ।

ix. 9, 8. “Prepare (O Soma) the paths for our newest, most recent hymn; and, as of old, cause the lights to shine.”

Panini openly states the fact that there are old and new Brahmanas; whereas, according to the doctrine of later times, the Brahmanas are neither old nor new, but eternal and of divine origin. He rests his opinion as to the difference of dates on the evidence of language.

One argument for the eternity of the Vedas is that sound is eternal. To any person of common sense the simple statement of this proof, is its refutation. The same argument would prove every book to be eternal.

**3. Internal Evidence of the Authorship of the Vedas.**—When a deed is produced in court which is affirmed to have been written many hundred years ago, there are often means of judging from the document itself as to its age. Suppose, for example, it contained the names of Warren Hastings or Hyder Ali, it could at once be known that it could not be older than last century. If it were asserted that these referred to other persons of the same name who lived long before or that they were prophecies, the conclusion would be that it was an attempt to support one falsehood by another. If the Vedas are eternal, why are the names of so many persons mentioned in them who lived in comparatively recent times?

“The hymns of the Rig-Veda themselves supply us with numerous data by which we can judge of the circumstances to which they owed their origin, and of the manner in which they were created. They afford us very distinct indications of the locality in which they were composed. The Indus is the great river; the Ganges is only twice mentioned; the Sarasvati was the eastern boundary.

“The hymns show us the Aryan tribes living in a state of warfare with surrounding enemies (some of them, probably, alien in race and language), and gradually, as we may infer, forcing their way onward to the east and south. They supply us with numerous specimens of the particular sorts of prayers, *viz.*, for protection and victory, which men so circumstanced would naturally address to the gods whom they worshipped as well as of the more common supplications which men in general offer up for the various blessings which constitute the sum of human welfare.”\*

The following hymn to Indra, asking him to destroy the Dasyus, the aborigines, and give food and a camp with running water, bears internal evidence that it was composed at a time when the Aryans were invading India:

1. Glad thee: thy glory hath been quaffed, lord of bay steeds, as  
'twere the bowl's enlivening mead.  
For thee the strong there is strong drink, mighty, with countless  
powers to win.
2. Let our strong drink, most excellent, exhilarating, come to thee,  
Victorious, Indra! bringing gain, immortal, conquering in fight.
3. Thou, hero winner of the spoil, urgest to speed the car of man.  
Burn, like a vessel with the flame, the lawless Dasyu, conqueror!

4. Empowered by thine own might, O sage, thou stolest Surya's chariot wheel.  
Thou bearest Kutra with the steeds of Wind to Sushna as his death.
5. Most mighty is thy rapturous joy, most splendid is thine active power,  
Wherewith, foe-slaying, sending bliss, thou art supreme in gaining steeds.
6. As thou, O Indra, to the ancient singers wast ever joy, as water to the thirsty,  
So unto thee I sing this invocation. May we find food, a camp with running water.\*

#### 4. Conclusion as to the Authorship of the Vedas.

Quotations have been given from Hindu sacred books containing fourteen different opinions as to the origin of the Vedas. In opposition to these, the authorship of many of the hymns is distinctly claimed by persons whose names are given. The hymns themselves show that they were written when the Aryans were entering India, when they had not advanced much beyond the border, and were engaged in constant wars with the aborigines.

Victory in battle was often ascribed to the virtue of some hymn. Thus in the Rig-Veda, vii. 33, 3, "Did not Indra preserve Sudas in the battle of the ten king through your prayer, O Vasishtas?"

Such hymns were considered unfailing spells, and became the sacred war-songs of a whole tribe. They were handed down from father to son as the most valuable heirloom.

The legitimate conclusion is that the Vedic hymns were written by the authors whose names they bear, and that they are not eternal.

#### THE TIME WHEN THE VEDAS WERE COMPOSED.

The Cambridge Professor of Sanskrit says, "The very word history has no corresponding Indian expression. From the very earliest ages down to the present time, the Hindu mind seems never to have conceived such an idea as an authentic record of past facts based on evidence."

Hindu writers framed their chronology, like their geography and astronomy, out of their own heads. It was as easy to write a crore of years as a century, and the former was the more marvellous.

There is no date in India known with certainty till the time of Chandragupta, about 300 B. C., which was ascertained through the Greeks. The precise time when the Vedas were written cannot, therefore, be known with certainty. Indeed, their composition probably extended over several centuries. Max Müller estimates that

they were composed, such as we now have them, about 1500 B. C.\* In his *Hibbert Lectures*, (p. 340), he expresses the opinion that the Samhita (collection) was closed about 1000 B. C. The Brahmanas may date from 800 to 600 B. C. The Sutras may range from 600 to 200 B. C.

### THE VEDAS AT FIRST HANDED DOWN BY TRADITION.

The oldest inscriptions in India are those of Asoka, the Buddhist king, who reigned from 259 to 222 B. C. Nearchus, the admiral of Alexander the Great, who sailed down the Indus (325 B. C.), mentions that the Indians wrote letters on cotton that had been well beatep together, "but that their laws were not written." Writing was used by merchants and others, but not for literary purposes.

In a volume of the Berlin Encyclopædia, Dr. Bühler gives an interesting account of the origin of Indian writing. It seems to date farther back than is supposed by some.

Max Müller says; "There is not one single allusion in these hymns (of the Rig-Veda) to any thing connected with writing."

"Pure Brahmans never speak of their *granthas* or books. They speak of their *Veda*, which means 'knowledge.' They speak of their *Śruti*, which means what they have heard with their ears. They speak of *Smṛiti*, which means what their fathers have declared unto them. We meet with *Brahmanas*, i.e., the sayings of Brahmans; with *Sutras*, i.e., the strings of rules; with *Vedāṅgas* i.e. the members of the Veda; with *Pravachanas*, i.e. preachings; with *Sastras*, i.e. teachings; with *Darsanas*, i.e. demonstrations; but we never meet with a book, or a volume, or a page."\*

The Vedas, for many centuries, were handed down entirely by memory. The Guru recited a portion, and his pupils repeated it after him. There is a reference to this in the hymn about the frogs: "the one repeats the sounds of the other, as a pupil the words of his teacher."

The following account of the method of instruction is abridged from Max Müller :

"How then was the Veda learnt? It was learnt by every Brahman during 12 years of his studentship or Brahmacharya. This, according to Gautama, was the shortest period, sanctioned only for men who wanted to marry and to become Grihasthas. Brahmans who did not wish to marry were allowed to spend 48 years as students. The Prātisākhya gives us a glimpse into the lecture-rooms of the Brahmanic Colleges. 'The Guru,' it is said, 'who has himself formerly been a student, should make his pupils read. He himself takes his seat either to the east, or the north, or the north-east. If he has no more than one or two pupils, they

\* India, *Handbook of the Vedas*, p. 161, 162.  
† *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 497, 412.

sit at his right hand. If he has more, they place themselves according as there is room. They then embrace their master and say, 'Sir, read !' The master gravely says, 'Om,' i.e. 'Yes.' He then begins to say a *prasma* (a question), which consists of 3 verses. In order that no word may escape the attention of his pupils, he pronounces all with the high accent, and repeats certain words twice, or he says 'so' (*iti*) after these words.'

"It does not seem as if several pupils were allowed to recite together, for it is stated distinctly that the Guru first tells the verses to his pupil on the right, and that every pupil, after his task is finished, turns to the right, and walks round the tutor. This must occupy a long time every day, considering that a lecture consists of 60 or more *prasnās*, or of about 180 verses. The pupils are not dismissed till the lecture is finished. At the end of the lecture, the tutor, after the last half-verse is finished says, 'Sir,' the pupil replies 'Yes, sir.'" He then repeats the proper verses and formulas, which have to be repeated at the end of every reading, embraces his tutor, and is allowed to withdraw."\*

Years were spent in learning the books by rote. Some selected certain books ; others different ones ; so that, in this way, hymns were preserved from generation to generation.

"A Brahman," says Max Müller, "is not only commanded to pass his apprenticeship in the house of his Guru, and to learn from his mouth all that a Brahman is bounded to know, but the fiercest imprecations are uttered against all who would presume to acquire their knowledge from written sources. In the Mahabharata we read 'Those who sell the Vedas, and even those who write them, those also who defile them, they shall go to hell.' Kumarila says, 'That knowledge of the truth is worthless which has been acquired from the Veda, if the Veda has not been rightly comprehended, if it has been learnt from writing, or been received from a Sudra.'"†

The Brahmins persuaded the people to regard the Vedas with such superstitious awe, that a mere error of pronunciation was supposed to mar their miraculous power.

Professor Whitney thus explains why it was forbidden to write the Vedas :

"It is not very difficult to conjecture a reason why the Brahmins may, while acquainted with letters, have rigorously ignored them, and interdicted their confessed use in connection with the sacred literature. The Brahman priesthood was originally a class only, which grew into a close hereditary caste, on the strength, mainly, of their special possession of ancient hymns, and their knowledge of how these were to be employed with due effect in the various offices of religion. The hymns had unquestionably long been handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation, in the custody of certain families or branches of the caste, each family having chiefly in charge the lyrics which its own ancestor had first sung. These were their most treasured possession, the source of

\* *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 503, 506.

† *Ibid* p. 502.

their influence and authority. It might, then, naturally be feared that, if committed to the charge of written documents, when writing came to be known and practised among the more cultivated of the people—a class which could not be entirely restricted to the Brahmanic caste—and if suffered to be openly copied and circulated, passed from hand to hand, examined by profane eyes, the sacred texts would become the property of the nation at large, and the Brahmanic monopoly of them would be broken down. If, on the contrary, the old method of oral instruction alone in sacred things were rigidly kept up, if all open and general use of written texts were strictly forbidden, it is clear that the schools of Brahmanic theology would flourish, and remain the sole medium of transmission of the sacred knowledge, and that the doctrines and rites of religion would be kept under the control of the caste.”\*

The Druids, the ancient British priests, acted exactly in the same way. Caesar says that some of them spent twenty years in learning a large number of verses by heart, and that they considered it wrong to commit them to writing.

The Vedas were first printed by European Scholars. Some of the editions have already been noticed.

## SOCIAL LIFE IN VEDIC TIMES.

The original seat of the Aryans is disputed. Until a few years ago it was generally supposed to be in Central Asia. Some scholars now contend that it was in Eastern Europe. Max Müller still adheres to “Somewhere in Asia.” It was colder than India, for they counted their years by winters. In the Vedic prayers for long life, the worshipper asks for a hundred winters (*himas*). Like the northern tribes, they laid great stress upon the *ashvamedha*, or horse-sacrifice. Compared with their neighbours, they had a white or fair complexion.

When the Aryans increased in number so that their original home was unable to support them, they emigrated in bands. Some went westward towards the setting sun, and peopled Europe. Others turned their faces eastwards, and advanced towards the valley of the Indus. They marched in a large body, with their families, their servants, their cattle. India was probably entered by the mountain passes near Peshawar. Rivers were forded at conveniently shallow places, or, if deep, they were crossed in boats.

The greater part of India was then covered with forest, with scattered villages and towns belonging to the aboriginal tribes, who were of a dark complexion, and spoke a strange language. The Aryas had the pride of race in an extravagant degree, showing great contempt and hatred of the other nations with whom they came in contact. They called the aborigines the “black skin,” and

---

\* *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, pp. 86, 87.

as their noses were not so large as theirs, they were described as "goat-nosed" or "noseless." The aborigines were also called *Dasyus*, a word supposed to mean *enemies*. So many of them were enslaved, that the word *dasa* was afterwards applied to a servant.

Some of the *Dasyus* were like the Bhils or other wild tribes of India at present; others had a partial civilization. In several of the Vedic hymns the wealth of the *Dasyus* is mentioned, *e. g.*: "Subdue the might of the *Dasa*; may we through Indra divide his collected wealth." They had forts and cities. "Indra and Agni, by one effort together ye have shattered 90 forts belonging to the *Dasyus*." "O Indra, impetuous, thou didst shatter by thy bolt 99 cities for *Puru*."

The Aryans, as they advanced, gradually established themselves in the forests, fields, and villages of the aborigines. The latter contended as bravely as they could against their invaders. Their black complexion, barbarous habits, rude speech, and savage yells during their night attacks, made the Aryas speak of them as demons.

The Aryans were the more powerful. The *Dasyus* were either driven before them or were reduced to slavery. The first great distinction in India was between the white and dark races, the conquerors and the conquered, the freeman and the slave. One of the earliest aboriginal tribes brought under subjection was called *Sudras*, and the name was extended to the whole race.

The war invasion lasted for centuries, nor were the aborigines, as a whole, subjugated at any period.

The Indus is the great river of the Vedas. The name India was derived from *Sindhu*, the frontier river. The Ganges, literally the Go, Go, is only twice named in the Vedas. Several smaller rivers are mentioned. By degrees the Aryas spread eastward till they reached the *Sarasvati*, which was the boundary in Vedic times.

The state of society among the Aryans, as indicated by the hymns, will now be described.

**Villages and Towns.**—The invaders gradually settled in the Panjab. Villages were placed near watercourses, in positions favourable for pasturage and agriculture. The villages in some cases grew into towns, and these into cities. The houses in general, as at present, were built of mud. Some were of so frail a construction that they trembled as the *Maruts* passed, that is, when the fierce winds blew. In tracts bordering on the hills, where stone was abundant, that material was sometimes used. Indra is said to have demolished a hundred cities of stone. Iron cities or fortifications are mentioned.

**Rajas and Headmen.**—The country occupied by the Aryas was peopled by various tribes, and divided unto numerous principalities. Many names of kings occur in the *Rig-Veda*. Their meetings,

whether friendly or hostile, are mentioned. Indra is represented as living in the society of his wives like a king. When Mitra is said to occupy a great palace with a thousand pillars and a thousand gates, we may suppose that this is but an exaggerated description of a royal residence such as the poet had seen. The kings or chiefs did not acknowledge one superior. Hence sometimes an Aryan leader fought with an Aryan leader.

Mention is made of *purpati*, lords of cities, and *gramani*, heads of villages.

**Domestic Relations.**—In Vedic times the marriage of one wife seems to have been the rule. In some cases, from the *Svayamvara* ceremony, the bride could choose her husband. This shows that early marriage did not prevail. There was also more or less polygamy. A Rishi is said to have married in one day ten damsels. Two gods, the Ashvins, together took one wife. "Thus," says Dr. Rajendralala Mitra, "you have in the Rig-Veda, self-choice, polygamy, and polyandry." Widows were permitted to marry.

The general opinion of the female sex seems to have been that put into the mouth of Indra: "Indra himself hath said, The mind of woman brooks not discipline. Her intellect hath little weight." R. V. viii. 33, 17.

**Dress.**—References are made to well-dressed females and to well-made garments. From these passages and others relating to jewels, it may be gathered that considerable attention was already paid to personal decoration. The materials of the clothing were probably cotton and wool. The form of the garments was much the same as among the modern Hindus. A turban is mentioned. References to the needle and sewing suggest that made dresses were not unknown.

**Food.**—Foremost came the products of the cow. Butter and curds were essential at every meal. Fried grain, mixed with milk, was particularly relished. Barley and wheat were ground and baked into cakes. But *flesh* was considered *the best food*. The Satapatha Brahmana says: *Etad u ha vai paramam annādyam yan mīmsam*,\* 'Indeed, the best food is flesh.'

One of the most remarkable changes in Hindu customs since Vedic times is that with regard to the use of certain kinds of animal food. The late Dr. Rajendralala Mitra occupies the highest rank among Indian scholars, and he investigated the subject simply to give the real facts of the case. In his *Indo-Aryans*, he has a chapter headed, "Beef in Ancient India." It begins as follows:

"The title of this paper will, doubtless, prove highly offensive to most of my countrymen; but the interest attached to the enquiry in connexion with the early social history of the Aryan race on this side of the Himalaya, will, I trust, plead my excuse. The idea of beef—the flesh

\* Quoted by Rev. F. Kittel on Sacrifices, p. 40



of the earthly representative of the divine Bhagavati—as an article of food is so shocking to the Hindus, that thousands over thousands of the more orthodox among them never repeat the counterpart of the word in their vernaculars, and many and dire have been the sanguinary conflicts which the shedding of the blood of cows has caused in this country. And yet it would seem that there was a time when not only no compunctions visitings of conscience had a place in the mind of the people in slaughtering cattle—when not only the meat of that animal was actually esteemed a valuable aliment—when not only was it a mark of generous hospitality as among the ancient Jews, to slaughter the ‘fatted calf’ in honor of respected guests,—but when a supply of beef was deemed an absolute necessity by pious Hindus in their journey from this to another world and a cow was invariably killed to be burnt with the dead. To English men, who are familiar with the present temper of the people on the subject, and to a great many of the natives themselves, this remark may appear startling; but the authorities on which it is founded are so authentic and incontrovertible that they cannot, for a moment, be gainsaid.”

Dr. R. Mitra quotes Colebrooke as follows: “It seems to have been anciently the custom to slay a cow on that occasion (the reception of a guest) and a guest was therefore called a *goghna*, or ‘cow killer.’” In the “*Uttara-Rama-charitra* the venerable old poet and hermit Valmiki, when preparing to receive his brother sage Vasishtha, the author of one of the original law books (*Smritis*) which regulates the religious life of the people, and a prominent character even in the Vedas, slaughtered a lot of calves expressly for the entertainment of his guests. Vasishtha, in his turn, likewise slaughtered the ‘fatted calf’ when entertaining Visvamitra Janaka Satananda, Jamadagnya, and other sages and friends.”†

In the Rig-Veda, 1st Ashtaka, 4th Adhyaya, 29th Varga, the following prayer is addressed to Indra: “Hurl thy thunderbolt against this Vritra and sever his joints, as (butchers cut up) a cow that the rains may issue from him.”

The late Mr. Kunte, B. A., of Poona, author of the *Suddarshan Chintanika*, says in his Prize Essay on *The Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization in India*: “Hospitality was the rule of life, and guests were received with great ceremony: cows were specially killed for them.” (p. 196).

The ancient Aryans highly valued their cows, but they did not make gods of them and worship them like the Hindus at the present time.

The sacrifice of oxen and cows, *gomedha*, will be noticed under another head.

Intoxicating liquors are mentioned in the hymns. Nearly the whole Mandala of the Rig-Veda is devoted to the praise of the Soma juice, Wine or spirit, *sura*, was also in use. “The earliest Brahman settlers,” says Dr. R. Mitra, “were a spirit-drinking race

and indulged largely both in Soma beer and strong spirits. To their gods the most acceptable and grateful offering was Soma beer, and wine or spirit was publicly sold in shops for the use of the community. In the Rig-Veda Samhita a hymn occurs which shows that wine was kept in leather bottles and freely sold to all comers. The *sura* of the *Sautramani* and the *Vajupaya* was no other than arrack, manufactured from rice meal. In the Ramayana the great ago Visvamitra is said to have been entertained with *maireya* and *ura* by his host Vasishtha. In the Mahabharata, the Yadavas are represented as extremely addicted to drinking.

Buddhism must have contributed much to check the spread of drunkenness in India, as it did in putting down the consumption of flesh meat; but it was never equal to the task of suppressing it.\*

**Grade of Society.**—The two great divisions of the people in Vedic times were the Aryans and the aborigines, afterwards called Sudras. The chief occupations of the Aryans were fighting and cultivating the soil. Those who fought gradually acquired influence and rank, and their leaders appear as Rajas. Those who did not share in the fighting were called Vis, Vaisyas, or householders.

At first any one might preside at a sacrifice. In the Vedas there are kings who composed their own hymns to the gods, Rajarishis, who united in their person the power both of king and priest. Visvamitra, the author of the Gayatri, was a Kshatriya. The Brahman was at first simply an assistant at sacrifices; afterwards he became a *purohita*, or family priest, and thus acquired influence.

Fighting and cultivation were sometimes united. Mr. Kunte says: "The patriarch and his sons and perhaps grandsons quietly cultivated their land, but when necessary, they mounted their horses, and, sword in hand, marched against their enemies. As yet the Brahmana was not afraid of wielding a sword, nor was the Kshatriya ashamed of tilling the land." †

Max Müller says: "The system of castes, in the ordinary sense of the word, did not exist during the Vedic age. What we may call castes in the Veda is very different even from what we find in the laws of Manu, still more from what exists at the present day." ‡

**Professions and Trades.**—Dr. Wilson, in his *India Three Thousand Years Ago*, gives the following sketch of the Social Life of the Aryas:

"The Aryas, in the times of the Vedas, were principally a pastoral, though to a certain extent an agricultural, people. Their flocks and herds and their sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, horses, camels, and teams of oxen, with the hump on their shoulders, are frequently mentioned, and made the subjects of supplication and thanksgiving both to gods and men. A

\* Abridged from the *Indo-Aryans*, Vol I. pp. 389—399.

† *Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization*, p. 191.

‡ *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 342.

daughter among them in the earliest times was designated *duhitri*, or milk-maid (the English word *daughter* has the same origin); and a *Gopa* and *Gopal*, or keeper of cattle, among them, came to mean a protector in general, no doubt from the owners or keepers of cows having great importance in the community."

"*Gotra*, cow-house, was applied to the fences erected to protect the herd from violence or prevent the cattle from straying. The Brahman boasting of his sacred blood and divine generation speaks of the particular *gotra*, to which he belongs, little dreaming that the word is itself a testimony that the fathers of his race were herdsmen."\*

"That the Aryans were not, however, merely a nomadic people is very evident. As well as their enemies, they had their villages and towns as well as cattle-pens; and many of the appliances, conveniences, luxuries, and vices, found in congregated masses of the human family. They knew the processes of spinning and weaving, on which they were doubtless principally dependent for their clothing. They were not strangers to the use of iron and to the crafts of the blacksmith, copper-smith, carpenter, and other artisans. They used hatchets in felling the trees of their forests, and they had planes for polishing the wood of their chariots. They constructed rims of iron to surround the wheels of their carts. They fabricated coats of mail, clubs, bows, arrows, javelins, swords or cleavers, and discs to carry on their warfare, to which they were sometimes called by the sound of the conch shell. They made cups, pitchers, and long and short ladles, for use, in their domestic economy and the worship of the gods. They employed professional barbers to cut off their hair. They knew how to turn the precious metals and stones to account; for they had their golden earrings, golden bowls, and jewel necklaces. They had chariots of war from which they fought, and ordinary conveyances drawn by horses and bullocks; they had rider-bearing steeds and grooms to attend them. They had eunuchs in their community. The daughters of vice were seen in their towns, and that, it would appear, with but a small accompaniment of shame; venders of spirits were also tolerated by them. They constructed skiffs, boats, rafts and ships; they engaged in traffic and merchandise in parts somewhat remote from their usual dwellings. Occasional mention is made in their hymns of the ocean which they had probably reached by following the course of the Indus. Parties among them covetous of gain are represented as crowding the ocean in vessels on a voyage. A naval expedition to a foreign country is alluded to as frustrated by a shipwreck." pp. 29—43, (abridged).

The caste prohibition against crossing the "black water," is not found in the Vedas, but was a later invention of the Brahmans to keep the Hindus better under their control. While the Aryas were so far civilised, writing seems to have been unknown. They had no books and newspapers like their descendants at present.

**Amusements.**—Gambling was very common among the early Indians, and numerous illustrations are derived from the practice.

---

\* Rev. W. O. Simmon.

In one of the hymns a gambler apparently describes his own experience :

1. The tumbling, air-born (products) of the great Vibhidaka tree (*i.e.*, the dice) delight me as they continue to roll on the dice board. The exciting dice seem to me like a draught of the soma-plant growing on mount Pujavat.

7. Hooking, piercing, deceitful, vexations, delighting to torment, the dice dispense transient gifts, and again ruin the winner ; they appear to the gambler covered with honey.

13. Never play with dice : practice husbandry ; rejoice in thy property, esteeming it sufficient. x. 34.

"At a sacrifice," says Mr. Kunte, "the Kshatriya especially played at dice with his wife or wives and sons."

Dancers or actors afforded entertainment to the Aryans. Ushas is said to display herself like a dancer who decks herself with ornaments. Allusion is made to the living going forth to dance and laugh after a funeral. Drums are mentioned, and a hymn in the Atharva Veda is addressed to that musical instrument.

**Crime.**—Thieves or robbers are mentioned in some passages as infesting the highways or stealing secretly. The following occurs in a hymn to Pushan : "Drive away from our path the waylayer, the thief, the robber." Another hymn says : "Men cry after him in battle as after a thief stealing clothes." Cattle were often stolen. "The aborigines found it easy to revenge themselves on the invading Aryas by driving away their cows. But the Aryas were also prepared against the annoyance. As soon as the herd of cows disappeared, hue and cry was raised, and sharp men who traced the track of a thief by observing foot-prints, set to work. The thief was detected. With shouts of thanks to Indra, the herd was recovered and driven home."

**Wars.**—In the Rig-Veda, wars are frequently mentioned. Cows and horses were often the cause. Indra is thus addressed. "O mighty Indra, we call upon thee as we go fighting for cows and horses." Max Müller says, "Fighting among or for the cows (*Gosuyudh*) is used in the Veda as a name for a warrior in general (I. 112, 122), and one of the most frequent words for battle is *gavisti*, literally 'striving for cows.'"

Mr. Kunte thus describes the mode of warfare :

"Different bands of the Aryas marched under their leaders, each having a banner of his own, singing of the prowess of their ancestors, and of the aid which Indra or Brihaspati granted them, and blowing conches. The leader drove in a war-chariot covered with cow-hides ; some used the bow and arrows ; others had darts. The army was divided into infantry and cavalry. Often did the leader of bands attack a town, and putting every inhabitant to the sword, occupied it. Sometimes they were content with large booty. Thus simultaneously, many Aryan leaders, independently of each other, waged war against the Dussas

and Dasyus who were often able to make an impression upon the invaders."\*

**Disposal of the Dead.**—While the Parsis and the ancestors of the Indian Aryans lived together in Central Asia, both probably exposed their dead to be devoured by vultures. After the Aryans came to India, burial was adopted. Dr. R. Mitra says: "This continued probably from their advent in India to about the 14th or 13th century B.C. Then came incremation with a subsequent burial of the ashes. This lasted from the 14th or 13th century B.C. to the early part of the Christian era, when the burial was altogether dispensed with, or substituted by consignment of the ashes to a river."† 3856

## THE GODS OF THE VEDAS:

### **The Religious Childhood of India.**—Max Müller says:

"In the hymns of the Veda we see man left to himself to solve the riddle of this world. We see him crawling on like a creature of the earth with all the desires and weakness of his animal nature. Food, wealth, and power, a large family and a long life, are the theme of his daily prayers. But he begins to lift up his eyes. He stares at the tent of heaven, and asks who supports it? He opens his eyes to the winds, and asks them whence and whither? He is awakened from darkness and slumber by the light of the sun, and him whom his eyes cannot behold, and who seems to grant him the daily pittance of his existence, he calls 'his life, his breath, his brilliant Lord and Protector.'‡

"The great majority of Vedic hymns consists in simple invocations of the fire, the water, the sky, the sun, and the stones, often under the same names which afterwards became the proper names of Hindu deities, but as yet nearly free from all that can be called irrational or mythological. There is nothing irrational, nothing I mean we cannot enter into or sympathise with, in people imploring the storms to cease, or the sky to rain, or the sun to shine. I say there is nothing irrational in it, though perhaps it might be more accurate to say that there is nothing in it that would surprise any body who is acquainted with the growth of human reason, or, at all events, of childish reason. It does not matter how we call the tendency of the childish mind to confound the manifestation with that which manifests itself, effect with cause, act with agent... We all know that it exists, and the youngest child who beats the chair against which he has fallen, or who scolds his dog, or who sings, 'Rain, rain, go to Spain,' can teach us that, however irrational all this may seem to us it is perfectly rational, natural, and inevitable in the first periods, or the childish age of the human mind."§

\* *Vicissitudes*, pp. 118, 119.

† *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. II., p. 120.

‡ *Chips*, Vol. I. 2nd Ed. p. 69.

§ *India. What can it teach us?* pp. 108, 109.

**The Devas.**—Max Müller thus explains the origin and gradual change in the meaning of this word :

“*Deva* meant originally bright, and nothing else. Meaning bright, it was constantly used of the sky, the stars, the sun, the dawn, the day, the spring, the rivers, the earth ; and when a poet wished to speak of all these by one and the same word—by what we should call a general term—he called them all *Devas*. When that had been done, *Deva* did no longer mean ‘the Bright ones,’ but the name comprehended all the qualities which the sky and the sun and the dawn shared in common excluding only those that were peculiar to each.

“Here you see how, by the simplest process, the *Devas*, the bright ones, might become and did become the *Devas*, the heavenly, the kind, the powerful, the invisible, the immortal—and in the end something very like the *theoi* or *dii* of Greeks and Romans.”\*

**Origin and Immortality.**—In the Vedas the gods are spoken of as immortal, but they are not regarded in general as self-existent beings ; in fact, their parentage, in most cases, is mentioned.

Very different accounts are given of the origin of the gods. In many passages the gods are described as being the offspring of Heaven and Earth. Ushas, the dawn, is characterised as the mother of the gods ; Brahmanaspati is called their father ; Soma is said to be the generator of Heaven, Earth, Agni, Surya, Indra, and Vishnu. Some of the gods are spoken of as being fathers and others as being sons. The most extraordinary feat is ascribed to Indra : “Thou hast indeed begotten thy father and mother together from thy own body.” As Max Müller remarks, “A god who once could do that, was no doubt capable of anything afterwards.”

“The same god is sometimes represented as supreme, sometimes, as equal, sometimes as inferior to others. There are as yet no genealogies, no settled marriages between gods and goddesses. The father is sometimes the son, the brother is the husband, and she who in one hymn is the mother, is in another the wife.”

In some places Savitri and Agni are said to have conferred immortality on the gods : elsewhere it is said that the gods drink soma to obtain the same gift ; but it is generally taught that they obtained their divine rank through austerities. The gods originally were all alike in power ; but three of them desired to be superior to the rest ; viz. Agni, Indra, and Surya. They continued to offer sacrifices for this purpose until it was obtained.

The immortality of the gods is only relative. They are supposed to be subject to the same law of dissolution as other beings. “Many thousands of Indras and of other gods have, through time, passed away in every mundane age.” The gods both desire and are capable of *mukti*, liberation from future births.

Some of the principal gods will now be described.

## DYAS AND PRITHIVI.

Dyaus, says Max Müller, is one of the oldest gods, not only of the Vedic Aryans, but of the whole Aryan race. He was worshipped before a word of Sanskrit was spoken in India, or a word of Greek in Greece.\* He adds:

"If I were asked what I consider the most important discovery which has been made during the nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind, I should answer by the following short line:

"Sanskrit DYAUSH-PITAR=Greek ΖΕΤΣΙΑΤΗΡ (ZEUS PATER)=Latin JUPITER—Old Norse TYR.

"Think what this equation implies! It implies not only that our own ancestors and the ancestors of Homer and Cicero (the Greeks and Romans) spoke the same language as the people of India—this is a discovery which, however incredible it sounded at first, has long ceased to cause any surprise—but it implies and proves that they all had once the same faith, and worshipped for a time the same supreme Deity under exactly the same name—a name which meant Heaven-Father."†

"Those simple-hearted forefathers of ours," says C. Kingsley, "looked round upon the earth and said within themselves, 'Where is the All-father, if All-father there be? Not in this earth; for it will perish. Nor in the sun, moon, or stars; for they will perish too. Where is He who abideth for ever?'

"Then they lifted up their eyes, and saw, as they thought, beyond sun, and moon, and stars, and all which changes and will change, the clear blue sky, the boundless firmament of heaven.

"That never changed; that was always the same. The clouds and storm rolled far below it, and all the bustle of this noisy world; but there the sky was still, as bright and calm as ever. The All-father must be there, unchangeable in the unchanging heaven; bright and pure, and boundless like the heavens; and, like the heavens too, silent and far off."

"And how," says Max Müller, "did they call that All-father?"

"Five thousand years ago, or, it may be earlier, the Aryans speaking as yet neither Sanskrit, Greek, nor Latin, called him *Dyupatar*, Heaven-father.

"Four thousand years ago, or, it may be earlier, the Aryans who had travelled southward to the rivers of the Punjab called him *Dyaush-pita* Heaven-father.

"Three thousand years ago, or, it may be earlier, the Aryans on the shores of the Hellespont, called him *Zeus πατήρ*, Heaven-father.

"Two thousand years ago, the Aryans of Italy looked up to that bright heaven above, and called it *Jupiter*, Heaven-father.

"And a thousand years ago the same Heaven-father and All-father was invoked in the dark forests of Germany by the Teutonic Aryans and his old name of *Tiu* or *Zio* was then heard perhaps for the last time.

\* *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 276, 288.

† *Nineteenth Century*, Oct. 1885.

"If we want a name for the invisible, the infinite, that surrounds us on every side, the unknown, the true Self of the world, and the true self of ourselves—we, too, feeling once more like children, kneeling in a small dark room, can hardly find a better name than : 'Our Father which art in Heaven.' "\*

There are clear traces in some of the hymns of the Rig-Veda that at one time Dyaus, the sky, was the supreme deity.

At an early period, however, the earth, under the name of Prithivi, was associated with Dyaus. The Aitareya Brahmana mentions their marriage : "The gods then brought the two (Heaven and Earth) together, and when they came together, they performed a wedding of the gods."

The ancient Greeks had the same ideas. The earth is addressed as, "Mother of gods, the wife of the starry Heaven." Their marriage, too, is described.

The Hindus thought their gods were much like themselves ; so heaven and earth were called the father and mother of the gods.

In the hymns there are various speculations about the origin of Dyaus and Prithivi. A perplexed poet enquires, "Which of these two was the first, and which the last ? How have they been produced ? Sages, who knows ?"

In the Veda Dyaus is chiefly invoked in connection with the Earth. "He is invoked by himself also, but he is a vanishing god, and his place is taken in most of the Vedic poems by the younger and more active god, Indra."†

#### ADITI AND THE ADITYAS.

ADITI, from *a*, not, and *diti*, bound, means what is boundless, infinite, eternal. Max Müller considers it as meaning what is beyond the earth, the sky, the sun, and the dawn. Muir says, "Perhaps Aditi may best be regarded as a personification of universal, all-embracing Nature." In Rig-Veda, i. 89, 10, she is thus described : "Aditi is the sky ; Aditi is the air ; Aditi is the mother, and father, and son ; Aditi is all the gods and the five tribes ; Aditi is whatever has been born ; Aditi is whatever shall be born." In Rig-Veda, x, 72, 4 ; it is said, "Daksha sprang from Aditi, and Aditi from Daksha."

Aditi is not the subject of any separate hymn, but she is supplicated for blessings in children and cattle, for protection, and for forgiveness. Whitney says, "This personification never went far enough to entitle her fairly to a place in the list of Vedic divinities."

The Adityas, the sons of Aditi, are more frequently mentioned than their mother. In Rig-Veda, ii. 27, 1, six are mentioned

\* Hibbert Lectures, pp. 216, 217.

† India : What can it teach us ? p. 195.



Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Varuna, Daksha, and Amsa. In x, 72, 8, 9, it is said that Aditi had 8 sons, of whom she presented only 7 to the gods, casting out Marthanda, the eighth, though she is said to have afterwards brought him forward. Varuna was considered the chief.

In after times the Adityas were increased to 12, as representing the sun in the twelve months of the year.

#### VARUNA.

Varuna, like Dyaus, is another representative of the highest heaven, as encompassing all things. The name is derived from *var*, to cover, and is identical with the Greek *Ouranos*, heaven.

"Varuna," says the Rig-Veda, "stemmed asunder the wide firmaments; he lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven; he stretched out apart the starry sky and the earth." In the Atharva-Veda, illimitable knowledge is ascribed to him:

"Varuna, the great lord of these worlds, sees as if he were near. If a man stands or walks or bides, if he goes to lie down or to get up, what two people sitting together whisper to each other, King Varuna knows it; he is there as the third. This earth, too, belongs to Varuna, the King, and this wide sky with its ends far apart. The two seas (the sky and the ocean) are Varuna's loins; he is also curtained in this small drop of water. He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varuna, the King. His spies proceed from heaven towards this world; with thousand eyes they overlook this earth. King Varuna sees all this, what is between heaven and earth, and what is beyond. He has counted the twinklings of the eyes of men. As a player throws down the dice, he settles all things." ix. 16.

Varuna, says Max Müller, "is one of the most interesting creations of the Hindu mind, because though we can still perceive the physical background from which he rises, the vast, starry brilliant expanse above, his features more than those of any of the Vedic gods have been completely transfigured; and he stands before us as a god who watches over the world, punishes the evil doer, and even forgives the sins of those who implore his pardon."\*

Varuna is the only Vedic deity to whom a high moral character is attributed. Whitney says:

"While in hymns to the other divinities long life, wealth, power are the objects commonly prayed for, of the Adityas is craved purity, for givenness of sin, freedom from its further commission. To them are offered humble confessions of guilt and repentance. It is a sore grief to the poets to know that man daily transgresses Varuna's commands; they acknowledge that without his aid they are not masters of a single moment; they fly to him for refuge from evil, expressing at the same time all confidence that their prayers will be heard and granted."†

\* *India: What can it Teach us?* p. 195.

† *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, 1st Ser. p. 43.

Mitra is generally associated with Varuna. He is a form of the sun, representing day, while Varuna denotes night. They together uphold and rule the earth and sky, guard the world, encourage religion, and with their nooses seize the guilty.

"In the Puranas, Varuna is stripped of all his majestic attributes, and represented as a mere god of the ocean."

## INDRA.

"In Sanskrit," says Max Müller, "the drops of rain are called *ind-u*, masculine themselves; he who sends them is called *Ind-ra*, the rainer, the irrigator, and in the Veda the name of the principal deity worshipped by the Aryan settlers in India.\* The name of Indra is peculiar to India, and must have been formed after the separation of the great Aryan family had taken place, for we find it neither in Greek, nor in Latin, nor in German."†

The gods of the Hindus are somewhat like kings who reign for a time, and then give place to successors. The first struggle for supremacy in the Hindu pantheon is between Heaven and Earth and Indra. Max Müller says:

"When we see those two giant spectres of Heaven and Earth on the background of the Vedic religion, exerting their influence for a time and then vanishing before the light of younger and more active gods, we learn a lesson which it is well to learn, and which we can hardly learn anywhere else—the lesson *how gods were made and unmade*,—how the Beyond or the Infinite was named by different names in order to bring it near to the mind of man, to make it for a time comprehensible, until, when name after name had proved of no avail, a nameless God was felt to answer best the restless cravings of the human heart."‡

Dyaus and Varuna, representing the bright blue sky or the starry heavens, were the highest deities of the Aryans in their original home. In India they came to a country where for months together the earth is exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, sometimes without a single shower, so that it is impossible for the fields to be ploughed or the seed to be sown. It is not surprising, therefore, that a god in whose hands are the thunder and lightning, at whose command the refreshing showers fall to render the earth fruitful, should most frequently be appealed to, and that the most laudatory songs should be addressed to him. Indra is the most popular deity of the Vedas.

"In the burning months of the hot season," says Dr. Mullens, "the ancient Aryans turn to Indra. It is Vritra (Drought) his enemy and theirs, that withholds the refreshing showers for which all eyes long.

\* *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 212.

† *India: What can it Teach us?* p. 182.

‡ *India: What can it Teach us?* p. 163.

And when at length along the western horizon the vapours thicken, and the desired storm bursts in grandeur—when they see the blinding dust whirling in lofty columns on its mighty march, and the swift sand flies low along the ground—when they see the blue flashes which pierce the clouds, and hear the crashing peals of the awful thunder, it is Indra and his Maruts who are fighting the celestial battle on their behalf. And when the driving rain pours from the heavy clouds, and the earth drinks it in, all nature renews its life, fresh verdure clothes the fields, and the birds carol their joyous songs, it is to the mighty Indra, the conqueror, that their thanks are paid, and from him that fresh blessings are humbly craved.”\*

Sometimes the clouds are represented under the figure of herds of cows stolen by the demons, and hidden in the hollows of the mountains. Indra finds them, splits the caverns with his bolt, and they are again set at liberty, and their teats shower down rain.

Different accounts are given of his parentage. In one hymn Ekashtaka is said to be his mother; in another he is said to have sprung from the mouth of Purusha; while a third makes him to have been generated by Soma. According to the Mahabharata, Indra is one of the sons of Kasyapa.

Indra is exalted above Dyaus, “The divine Dyaus bowed before Indra, before Indra the great Earth bowed with her wide spaces.” “At the birth of thy splendour, Dyaus trembled, the Earth trembled for fear of thy anger.”

Indra drives a golden chariot drawn by two yellow horses; the thunderbolt is his weapon, the rainbow is his bow; the Maruts, or storm-winds, are his companions. Like other Hindu gods, he is provided with a wife, called Indrani.

In the Vedas, Indra is characterised by his fondness for war and the intoxicating soma juice.

Even as an infant, Indra is said to have manifested his warlike tendencies. “As soon as he was born, the slayer of Vritra grasped his arrow, and asked his mother, Who are they that are renowned as fierce warriors?” “His love of the soma juice was shown as early.” “On the day that thou wast born, thou didst, from love of it, drink the mountain-grown juice of the soma plant.”

A frequent epithet of Indra is *somapā*, soma-drinker. In the hymns he is invited by his worshippers to drink like “a thirsty stag” or like a “bull roaming in a waterless waste”; to fill his belly by copious potations. His inebriety is said to be “most intense.” The sensations of the god after drinking the soma are described: “The draughts which I have drunk impel me like violent blasts. The five tribes of men appear to me not even as a mote: I have quaffed the soma. The two worlds do not equal one half of me: I have quaffed the soma. One-half of me is in the

ky, and I have drawn the other down. I have quaffed the soma." Rig-Veda, x. 119.

Thus exhilarated, Indra goes forth to war. Some of his feats are thus described in the Rig-Veda, I. 53 :

"6. These draughts inspired thee, O lord of the brave, these were vigour, these libations, in battles, when for the sake of the poet, the sacrificer, thou struckest down irresistibly ten thousands of enemies.

"7. From battle to battle thou advancest bravely, from town to town thou destroyest all this with might, when thou, Indra, with Nami as thy friend, struckest down from afar the deceiver Namuchi."

While the Aryans were engaged in fierce contests with the aborigines, Indra held the highest rank. When the latter had been reduced to subjection, Indra gave place to other deities. In the Puranas he reigns over Swarga; but is often in fear lest he should be dethroned. Many instances are recorded of his adultery. According to the Mahabharata, he seduced Ahalya, the wife of Gautama, his spiritual teacher. By the curse of the sage, Indra's body was impressed by a thousand marks, so that he was called Sa-yoni; but these marks were afterwards changed to eyes, and he is hence called 'the thousand-eyed.'

#### AGNI.

Agni is the god of fire, the Latin *ignis*, fire. He is one of the most prominent deities of the Rig-Veda, as far more hymns are addressed to him than to any other divinity except Indra.

Fire is very necessary for human existence. It enables food to be cooked; it gives the power of carrying on work at night; in cold climates it preserves people from being frozen to death. In early times, when lucifer matches were unknown, fire was looked upon with somewhat like religious awe. The production of fire by the friction of wood or its sudden descent from the sky in the form of lightning, seemed as marvellous as the birth of a child. In the hymns of the Vedas fire is praised and worshipped as the best and kindest of the gods, the only god who had come down from heaven to live on earth, the friend of man, the messenger of the gods, the mediator between gods and men, the immortal among mortals. He, it is said, protects the settlements of the Aryans, and frightens away the "black-skinned enemies."

Soon, however, fire was conceived by the Vedic poets under the more general character of light and warmth, and then the presence of Agni was perceived, not only on the hearth and the altar, but in the Dawn, in the Sun, and in the world beyond the Sun, while at the same time its power was recognised as ripening, or as they called it, as cooking, the fruits of the earth, and as supporting also the warmth and the life of the human body. From that point of

view Agni, like other powers, rose to the rank of a Supreme God. He is said to have stretched out heaven and earth—naturally, because without his light heaven and earth would have been invisible and undistinguishable. The next poet says that Agni held heaven aloft by his light, that he kept the two worlds asunder; and in the end Agni is said to be the progenitor and father of heaven and earth, and the maker of all that flies, or walks, or stands, or moves on earth.\*

Various accounts are given of the origin of Agni. He is said to be a son of Dyaus and Prithivi; he is called the eldest son of Brahma, and is then named Abhimani; he is reckoned amongst the children of Kasyapa and Aditi, and hence one of the Adityas. In the later writings he is described as a son of Angiras, king of the Pitris. He is occasionally identified with other gods and goddesses, as Indra, Vishnu, Varuna, Rudra, Sarasvati, &c. "All gods," it is said, "are comprehended in him."

Agni was worshipped in the fire kindled in the morning. The whole family gathered around it, regarding it with love and awe, as at once a friend and a priest. It was a visible god conveying the oblation of mortals to all gods. His nobleness was extolled, as though a god he deigned to sit in the very dwellings of men. At sunset, Agni is the only divinity left on earth to protect mortals till the following dawn; his beams then shine abroad, and disperse the demons of darkness.

Agni's proper offering is ghee. When this is sprinkled into the flame, it mounts higher and glows more fiercely; the god has devoured the gift, and thus testifies his satisfaction and pleasure. Several of his epithets describe his fondness for butter. He is butter-fed, butter-formed, butter-haired, butter-backed, &c. He himself exclaims, "butter is my eye." The poor man who cannot offer ghee, brings a few pieces of wood to feed the fire.

As destroyer of the Rakshasas, Agni assumes a different character. He is represented in a form as hideous as the beings he is invoked to devour. He sharpens his two iron tusks, puts his enemies into his mouth, and swallows them. He heats the edges of his shaft and sends them into the hearts of the Rakshasas.

The first hymn of the Rig-Veda is addressed to Agni, and all the other books, except two, begin with hymns to him.

#### PARJANYA.

Parjanya was an older Aryan god than Indra. The latter as already mentioned, is peculiar to India. Two Aryan languages have carried the name of Parjanya to the shores of the Baltic. His functions were somewhat similar to those of Indra. He is the god

---

\* *India: What can it Teach us?* pp. 176, 177

of thunder-storms and rain, the generator and nourisher of plants and living creatures.

Three hymns are addressed to Parjanya in the Rig-Veda. In some passages he appears as a supreme god. He is called father, like Dyaus, the sky. He is called *asura*, the living or life-giving god, a name peculiar to the oldest and greatest gods. One poet says, "He rules as god over the whole world; all creatures rest in him; he is the life (*âtma*) of all that moves and rests (vii. 101. 6). In other hymns he is represented as performing his office, namely that of sending rain upon the earth, under the control of Mitra and Varuna, who are then considered as the highest lords, the mightiest rulers of heaven and earth." In other verses Parjanya appears simply as a name of cloud or rain.\* In later times the name is applied to Indra.

#### VAYU.

The second hymn of the Rig-Veda is addressed to *Vayu*, the blower. He is also called *Vata*, the blast. There are not many hymns belonging to him. In the Purushasukta, Vayu is said to have sprung from the breath of Purusha, and in another hymn he is called the son-in-law of Tvastri. He is often associated with Indra, and rides in the same chariot with him, Indra being the charioteer. One hymn, referring to both, says: "Drink of the soma, for to you twain belongs the right to take the first draught." He is called the king of the whole world, the first born, the breath of the gods, the germ of the whole world, whose voices we hear, though we can never see him. Rig-Veda, i, 168.

In later books Hanuman is said to be his son.

#### THE MARUTS, OF STORM GODS.

"The Maruts, literally the Smashers, are clearly the representatives of such storms as are known in India when the air is darkened by dust and clouds, when in a moment the trees are stripped of their foliage, their branches shivered, their stems snapped, when the earth seems to reel and the mountains to shake, and the rivers are lashed into foam and fury. Then the poet sees the Maruts approaching with golden helmets, with spotted skins on their shoulders, brandishing golden spears, whirling their axes, hooting fiery arrows, and cracking their whips amidst thunder and lightning. They are the comrades of Indra, sometimes like Indra, the sons of Dyaus, or the sky, but also the sons of another terrible god, called Rudra, or the Howler, a fighting god, to whom many hymns are addressed. In him a new character is

---

\* India: What can it Teach us? pp. 184, 185.

evolved, that of a healer and saviour,—a very natural transition in India, where nothing is so powerful for dispelling miasmas, restoring health, and imparting fresh vigour to man and beasts, as a thunder-storm, following after weeks of heat and drought.”\*

The number of them in one place is said to be thrice sixty, and in another only twenty-seven. Different parentage is also assigned to them. They are sons of Rudra, sons and brothers of Indra, sons of the ocean, sons of heaven, sons of earth.

The Hymns to the Maruts, with copious notes, have been translated by Max Müller.

### SOLAR DEITIES.

With reference to light, Whitney says:

“The very prominent part which this element has played in giving form to the earliest religions of all nations is well known; that of the Indian forms no exception; he even manifests a peculiar sensitiveness to the blessings of the light, and a peculiar abhorrence of darkness. The former is to him life, motion, happiness, breath; the latter death, helplessness, evil, the time and abode of demons. Accordingly, the phenomena of the night, moon and stars, he almost ignores; the one makes no figure at all in his religion, the others are but rarely even alluded to.”†

Max Müller thus shows how the sun was gradually developed into a supreme being:

“The first step leads us from the mere light of the sun to that light which in the morning wakes man from sleep, and seems to give new life not only to man, but to the whole of nature. He who wakes us in the morning, who recalls the whole of nature to new life, is soon called ‘the giver of daily life.’

“Secondly, by another and bolder step the giver of daily light and life becomes the giver of light and life in general. He who brings light and life to-day, is the same who brought life and light in the first of days. As light is the beginning of the day, so light was the beginning of creation, and the sun, from being a mere light-bringer or life-giver, becomes a creator, then soon also a ruler of the world.

“Thirdly, as driving away the dreaded darkness of the night, and likewise as fertilizing the earth, the sun is conceived as a defender and kind protector of all living things.

“Fourthly as the sun sees everything and knows everything, he is asked to forget and forgive what he alone knows.”‡

\* *India: What can it Teach us?* pp. 180, 181.

† *Oriental Linguistic Studies*, 1st Ser. p. 37.

‡ *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 265, 266.

## MITRA.

In the Vedas Mitra is generally associated with Varuna : he is seldom mentioned alone. Sayana says, "Mitra is the god who presides over the day, and Varuna is the god who rules over the night." Mitra is the same as the Persian Mithra. He must have been worshipped before the Persian and Indian branches of the Aryans separated. He is a form of the sun. Mitra and Varuna have the same attributes. In hymn iii. 59, Mitra is addressed alone. The following are a few quotations : "Mitra uttering his voice calls men to activity. Mitra sustains the earth and the sky. Mitra with unwinking eye beholds (all) creatures. Mitra, son of Aditi, may the mortal who worships thee with sacred rites have food. He who is protected by thee is neither slain nor conquered."

## SURYA.

Surya, the sun god, is in one hymn styled the son of Dyans : in another he is called the son of Aditi. Ushas is in one place said to be his wife, while in another she is described as his mother. He moves in a car which is sometimes said to be drawn by one and sometimes by seven fleet and ruddy horses. Pushan goes as his messenger with his golden ships, which sail in the aerial ocean. Surya is the preserver and soul of all things stationary and moving ; enlivened by him men perform their work ; he is far-seeing, all-seeing, beholds all creatures, and the good and bad deeds of mortals. By his greatness he is the divine leader of the gods. The epithets architect of the universe and possessed of all divine attributes, are applied to him.

In many passages, however, the dependent position of Surya is asserted. He is said to have been caused to shine by Indra, who also once carried off one of the wheels of his chariot. Mitra and Varuna sometimes conceal him by clouds and rain.\*

In the Ramayana, Sanjna, the daughter of Visvakarma, is the wife of Surya. As his brightness was too great for his wife, Visvakarma cut part of him away. The fragments fell blazing to the earth, and from them Visvakarma formed the discus of Vishnu, the trident of Siva, and the weapons of the other gods !

## SAVITRI.

Savitri is sometimes distinguished from Surya, sometimes identified with him. The two names are sometimes employed indiscriminately to denote the same deity. Sayana says that the sun before his rising is called Savitri, and Surya from his rising to his setting. The name is supposed to mean *Generator*.

---

\* Abridged from Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V. pp. 156-159.



Savitri is pre-eminently the golden deity, being golden-eyed, golden-handed, golden-tongued, the yellow-haired. Luminous in his aspect, he ascends a golden car, drawn by radiant, brown, white-footed horses, and beholding all creatures, he pursues an ascending and descending path. He is lord of all desirable things and sends blessings from the sky, from the atmosphere, and the earth.\*

The worship of Savitri has continued to present time. It is to him that the Gayatri is addressed at his rising by every devout Brahman. This short verse is supposed to exert magical powers. It is as follows :

Tat Savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhīmohi |  
dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt | iii. 62, 10.

It has been variously translated. Griffith renders it thus :

“ May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the god :  
So may he stimulate our prayers.”

Wilson says that it was “ in its original use, a simple invocation of the sun to shed a benignant influence upon the customary offices of worship.” The Skanda Purana thus extols it :

“ Nothing in the Vedas is superior to the Gayatri. No invocation is equal to the Gayatri, as no city is equal to Kasi. The Gayatri is the mother of the Vedas and of Brahmans. By repeating it a man is saved. What is there indeed that cannot be effected by the Gayatri ? For the Gayatri is Vishnu, Brahma, and Siva and the three Vedas.”

#### VISHNU.

Vishnu is the only one of the great gods of the Hindu triad who makes his appearance under the same name in the Veda. In the Veda, however, he is not in the first rank of gods. He is the sun in his three stations of rise, zenith, and setting. This the Vedic poets conceive of as striding through heaven at three steps. This is Vishnu's great deed, which in all his hymns is sung to his praise. It constitutes the only peculiar trait belonging to him. Concerning these steps it is said that two of them are near the habitation of men. The third none can attain, not even the bird in its flight. He took them for the benefit of mortals, that all might live safe and happy under them. The middle station, the zenith, is called Vishnu's place.†

In Manu the name Vishnu is mentioned, but not as that of a great deity. In the Mahabharata and Puranas, he becomes the second member of the triad, the preserving power, the all-pervading spirit.

\* Abridged from Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. V. pp. 162-170.

† Whitney's *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, 1st Ser. pp. 41, 42.

## PUSHAN.

The word Pushan comes from the root *push* ; the primary idea is that of nourisher. He is the protector and nourisher of cattle (*pashupā*). He was originally the sun as viewed by shepherds. As a cowherd he carries an ox goad, and he is drawn by goats. He is a guide on roads and journeys. He is called the lover of his sister Surya conceived as a female deity.

"Though in one place" says Max Müller, "he is spoken of as only higher than mortals and equal to the gods, he is in other places called the lord of all that rests and moves. Like all solar deities, he sees everything, and like Savitri he is also supposed to conduct the souls of the departed to the regions of the blessed."\*

In later books he is represented as toothless. He feeds upon a kind of congee, and the offerings made to him are of ground materials. The cause of his being toothless is variously explained. One account is that at the Daksha sacrifice Rudra knocked out his teeth while he was eating the purodasa offering.

## USHAS.

This goddess corresponds to the Eos of the Greeks, and to the Aurora of the Romans. The hymns specially addressed to her are about 20 in number.

"The worship of the Indian," says Whitney, "commenced at day-break; Ushas, the dawn, is the earliest object of his morning songs. The promise of the day is hailed with overflowing and inspiring joy; the feeling of relief as the burden of darkness is lifted off the world, and the freedom and cheerfulness of the day commence again, prompts to truly poetic strains, and the songs to Ushas are among the finest in the Veda. She is addressed as a virgin in glittering robes, who chases away the darkness, or to whom her sister Night willingly yields her domain; who prepares a path for the sun; is the signal of the sacrifice, rouses all beings from slumber, gives sight to the darkened; and power of motion to the prostrate and helpless. In the midst of such gladsome greetings, however the poet is reminded, by the thought of the many dawns that have thus shone upon the earth, and the many that are to follow them, of those who, having witnessed the former ones are now passed away, and of those who shall welcome them when he is no more. So he is led to mournful reflections on the wasting away of life, as one day after another is subtracted from the time allotted to each mortal."†

Ushas is represented as the daughter of heaven and loved by the Sun, but vanishing before him at the very moment when he tries to embrace her with his golden rays. Agni and the gods generally are described as waking from sleep with Ushas.

\* *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 263, 269.

† *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, 1st Series. pp. 37, 38.

## ASVINS.

The name of these deities has long been a riddle. Max Müller says, "Why they were called Asvinau (dual) horsemen has never been explained; but we are probably not very far wrong if we interpret horsemen as the riders or representatives of the heavenly horse or the sun."\* Roth says, "They are the earliest bringers of light in the morning sky, who in their chariot hasten onwards before the Dawn, and prepare the way for her.

They are ever young and handsome, bright, swift as falcons, and possessed of many forms. They ride in a golden car drawn by horses or birds. As personifications of the morning twilight, they are said to be children of the sun by a nymph who concealed herself in the form of a mare; hence she was called *Asvini*, and her sons Asvins. But inasmuch as they precede the rise of the sun, they are called his parents in his form Pushan. Their attributes are numerous, but relate mostly to youth and beauty, light and speed, duality, the curative power and active benevolence. They were the physicians of Swarga.†

## TVASHTRI.

Tvashtri is the Vulcan of the Romans. He is the most skilful of workmen, who is versed in all wonderful contrivances. He sharpens and carries the great iron axe, and forges the thunderbolts of Indra. He forms husband and wife for each other. He has given to the heaven and earth and to all things their form. He is master of the universe, the first-born protector and leader. He is the bestower of blessings, and is possessed of abundant wealth, and grants prosperity.

In later times Tvashtri is regarded as one of the Adityas. He is said to have had twin children. One was a daughter, Saranya, who married Vivasvat. The other was a son, Trisiras, who had 3 heads, 6 eyes, and 3 mouths, and was slain by Indra.

## THE RIBHUS.

The Ribhus are said to be three sons of Sudhanwan, a descendant of Angiras. They are celebrated in the Rig-Veda as skilful workmen, who fashioned Indra's chariot and horses, and made their parents young again. By command of the gods, and with a promise of exaltation to divine honours, they made a single sacrificial cup fashioned by Tvashtri into four. They are also spoken of as supporters of the sky.‡

\* *The Academy*, August, 13, 1892.

† Dowson's *Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, pp 29, 30.

‡ Dowson's *Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* p. 267.

## VISHVAKARMAN.

Vishvakarman, all-creating, was originally an epithet of any powerful god ; but in course of time it came to designate a personification of the creative power. In this character Vishvakarman was the great architect of the universe. As such, two hymns are addressed to him.

In later books he is identified with Tvashtri. In the Ramayana he is represented as having built the city of Lanka for the Rakshasas.

## PRAJAPATI.

"Prajapati, the lord of creatures," says Max Müller, is "in many respects identical with Visvakarman, the maker of all things, yet enjoying a greater individuality than Visvakarman, particularly in the Brahmanas. In some of the hymns of the Veda, Prajapati occurs as a mere epithet of Savitri, the sun.

"He is also invoked as bestowing progeny, and there is one hymn (Rig-Veda x. 121) where he is celebrated as the creator of the universe, as the first of all gods, also called Hiranyagarbha, the golden germ, or the golden egg.†"

"Now and then, in reading certain chapters of the Brahmanas, one imagines that the craving after one supreme personal God has at last found its satisfaction in Prajapati, the lord of all living things and that all the other gods would vanish before this new radiance. Thus we read:

"Prajapati alone was all this in the beginning. Prajapati is Bharata, the supporter, for he supports all this. Prajapati created living creatures. From his higher vital breath he created the gods ; from his lower vital breath he created men. Afterwards he created death as one who should be a devourer for all living creatures. Of that Prajapati one half was mortal, the other immortal, and with that half which was mortal he was afraid of death." Satapatha Brahmana, x, 1, 3, 1, †

## BRIHASPATI AND BRAHMANASPATI.

In the Rig-Veda the two names are equivalent. He is a deity in whom the action of the worshipper upon the gods is personified. He is the suppliant, the sacrificer, the priest who intercedes with the gods on behalf of men, and protects, them from the wicked. He represents the priests and the priestly order. He is also designated as the purohita of the gods. He is the lord and protector of prayer.

In the Rig-Veda he is described as the father of the gods ; to have blown forth the births of the gods like a blacksmith. In

\* This hymn is quoted in the selections.

† Hibbert Lectures, pp. 294, 297.

some passages he is identified with Agni, but this is opposed by others.

In later times he is a Rishi, and regent of the planet Jupiter.

#### VACH.

VACH, "speech," is the personification of speech by whom knowledge was communicated to man. She was 'generated by the gods,' and is called "the divine Vach," "queen of the gods." In the Taittiriya Brahmana she is called "that mother of the Vedas," and "the wife of Indra who contains within herself all worlds." She is celebrated in two hymns of the Tenth Book.

#### SOMA.

Hindus, at present, differ in their habits in two remarkable respects from their forefathers in Vedic times. One has already been noticed. The ancient Aryans delighted in eating beef, which is an utter abomination to their descendants. The other change is with regard to the use of intoxicants. Nearly a whole book of the Rig-Veda, containing 114 hymns, is devoted to the praise of Soma, and there are constant references to it in a large proportion of the other hymns. The ancient Aryans rejoiced in drinking; respectable Hindus now wisely abstain from what inebriates.

Not only were the people themselves fond of drinking the Soma juice, but the gods were represented as eager to partake of the beverage. Professor Whitney thus explains how it came to be worshipped:

"The simple-minded Aryan people, whose whole religion was a worship of the wonderful powers and phenomena of nature, had no sooner perceived that this liquid had the power to elevate the spirits, and produce a temporary frenzy, under the influence of which the individual was prompted to, and capable of, deeds beyond his natural powers, than they found in it something divine: it was to their apprehension a god, endowing those into whom it entered with godlike powers; the plant which afforded it became to them the king of plants; the process of preparing it was a holy sacrifice; the instruments used therefore were sacred."\*

The Soma is a creeping plant, with small white fragrant flowers. It yields a milky juice, which, when fermented, is intoxicating. The hymns addressed to Soma were intended to be sung while the juice of the plant was being pressed out and purified.

Various accounts are given of the way in which the Soma plant was obtained. In some passages the plant is said to have been brought from a mountain and given to Indra; in others King Soma is said to have dwelt among the Gandharvas. A third account is

---

\* *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*. 1st Series. pp. 10, 11.

that Soma existed in the sky, and that Gayatri become a bird, and brought it.

When Soma was brought to the gods, there was a dispute as to who should have the first draught. It was decided that a race should be run; the winner to have the first taste. Vayu first reached the goal, Indra being second.

The juice of the plant is said to be an immortal draught which the gods love. Soma, the god in the juice, is said to clothe the naked and heal the sick, through him the blind see, and the lame walk. Many divine attributes are ascribed to him. He is addressed as a god in the highest strains of veneration. All powers belong to him; all blessings are besought of him as his to bestow. He is said to be divine, immortal, and also to confer immortality on gods and men. Future happiness is asked from him: "Place me, O Pavamana, in that everlasting and imperishable world where there is eternal light and glory." IX. 113. 7.

In later times Soma was a name given to the moon. When the Vishnu Purana was written, intoxicants were strictly forbidden; hence Soma, as the god of the soma juice, was no longer known and praised. According to that Purana, Soma was the son of Atri, the son of Brahma.

The ancient Greeks had also a god of wine, called Bacchus.

# RUDRA.

Rudra means 'howler' or 'roarer.' In the Vedas he has many attributes and names. He is the howling terrible god, the god of storms, the father of the Rudras or Maruts. He is described as armed with a strong bow and fleet arrows. He is called the terror of men. His anger, ill-will, and destructive shafts are dreaded. He is the cause of health and prosperity to man and beast. He is frequently characterised as the possessor of healing medicines. As already mentioned, this may have its explanation in tempests clearing the air, and making it healthier.

"Rudra's chief interest," says Whitney, "consists in the circumstance that he forms the point of connection between the Vedic religion and the late Siva-worship. Siva is a god unknown to the Vedas; his name is a word of not unfrequent occurrence in the Puranas, indeed, but means simply 'propitious.' As given to him in those titles it has since become, it seems one of these euphemisms\* frequently frequent in the Indian religion, applied as a soothing and flattering address to the most terrible god in the whole Pantheon. The precise relation between Siva and Rudra is not yet satisfactorily traced out."†

\* Pleasing terms to express what is disagreeable.

† *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, 1st Series, p. 34.

## YAMA AND YAMI. J

Yama and Yami are represented as the twin son and daughter of Visvavat, the Sun. By some they are looked upon as the originators of the human race. In Rig-Veda X. 10, there is a dialogue between Yama and her brother, when she begs he brother to make her his wife. He declines her offer, because it is a sin that a brother should marry a sister. In the Atharva Veda Yama is said to be the first of men who died, the first that departed to the celestial world.

"Yama," says Muir, "is nowhere represented in the Rig-Veda as having anything to do with the punishment of the wicked. The hymns of that Veda contain no prominent mention of any such penal retribution. Yama is still to some extent an object of terror. He is represented as having two insatiable dogs, with four eyes and wide nostrils, which guard the road to his abode, and which the departed are advised to hurry past with all speed."

In the epic poems Yama is the god of departed spirits, and judge of the dead. Pluto, the Yama of the Romans, is represented as having Cerberus, a savage dog with three heads.



PLUTO.

## VISVE DEVAS.

In the Rig-Veda a number of hymns are addressed to the deities, as Mitra and Varuna, Indra and Agni, Indra and Varu. "The names of two gods who shared certain functions, in compound were formed into a compound with a dual termination, and the compound became the name of a new deity. Thus we have hymns not only to Mitra and Varuna, but to Mitrâvarunau as one...

third expedient was to comprehend all the gods by one common name; to call them Visve Devas, the All-gods, and to address prayers and sacrifices to them in their collective capacity.”\*

### KA, WHO ?

“New gods,” says Max Müller, “were actually created out of words which were intended as names of divine beings. There are several hymns in the Rig-Veda containing questions as to who is the true or the most powerful god. A rule had been laid down, that in every sacrificial hymn there must be a deity addressed by the poet. In order to discover a deity where no deity existed the most extraordinary objects, such as a present, a drum, stones, plants, were raised to the artificial rank of deities. In accordance with the same system we find the authors of the Brahmanas had so completely broken with the past that, forgetful of the poetical character of the hymns and the yearning of the poets after the unknown God, they exalted the interrogative pronoun itself into a deity, and acknowledged a god Ka or Who?”† In some places it is said that Ka is Prajapati. In the later Sanskrit literature of the Puranas, Ka appears as a recognised god, as a supreme god, with a genealogy of his own, perhaps even with a wife. The Mahabharata identifies Ka with Daksha, and the Bhagavata Purana applies the term to Kasyapa.

### GODDESSES.

Several goddesses are mentioned in the Vedas; but with the exception of Prithivi, Aditi, and Ushas, little importance is attached to them. Sarasvati is celebrated both as a river and as a deity. The wives of Agni, Varuna, the Ashvins, &c. are mentioned, but no distinct functions are assigned to them. Their insignificance is in striking contrast the prominent place assumed by the wife of Siva in the later mythology.

### THE PITRIS.

The following account of the Pitris is abridged from Max Müller's *India, What can it Teach us?*—

“There was in India, as elsewhere, another very early faith, springing up naturally in the hearts of the people, that their fathers and mothers, when they departed this life, departed to a Beyond, wherever it might be, either in the East from whence all the bright Devas seemed to come, or more commonly in the West, the land to which they seemed to go, called in the Veda the realms of Yama or the setting sun. The idea that beings which once had been, could ever cease to be, had not yet entered their minds; and from the belief that their fathers existed some-

\* *Hibbert Lectures* v. 291.



where, though they could see them no more, there arose the belief in another Beyond, and the germs of another religion.

Nor was the actual power of the fathers quite imperceptible or extinct even after their death. Their presence continued to be felt in the ancient laws and customs of the family, most of which rested on their will and their authority. While the fathers were alive and strong, their will was law; and when, after their death, doubts or disputes arose on points of law or custom, it was but natural that the memory and the authority of the fathers should be appealed to settle such points—that the law should still be their will.

Thus Manu says (IV. 178), 'On the path on which his fathers and grandfathers have walked, on that path of good men let him walk, and he will not go wrong.'

In the same manner then in which, out of the bright powers of nature the Devas or gods had arisen, there arose out of predicates shared in common by the departed, such as pitris, fathers, preta, gone away, another general concept, what we should call *Manes*, the kind ones, *Ancestors*, *Shades*, *Spirits*, or *Ghosts*, whose worship was nowhere more fully developed than in India. That common name, Pitris, Fathers, gradually attracted to itself all that the fathers shared in common. It came to mean not only fathers, but invisible, kind, powerful, immortal, heavenly beings, and we can watch in the Veda, better perhaps than anywhere else, the inevitable, yet most touching metamorphosis of ancient thought,—the love of the child for father and mother becoming transfigured into an instinctive belief in the immortality of the soul.

In the Veda the Pitris are invoked together with the Devas, but they are not confoinded with them. The Devas never become Pitris, and though such adjectives as *deva* are sometimes applied to the Pitris, and they are raised to the rank of the older classes of Devas, it is easy to see that the Pitris and Devas had each their independent origin, and that they represent two totally distinct phases of the human mind in the creation of its objects of worship.

We read in the Rig-Veda, VI. 52, 4: 'May the rising Dawns protect me, may the flowing Rivers protect me, may the firm Mountains protect me, may the Fathers protect me at this invocation of the gods.' Here nothing can be clearer than the separate existence of the Fathers apart from the Dawns, the Rivers, and the Mountains, though they are included in one common Devahûti, or invocation of the gods.

We must distinguish, however, from the very first, between two classes, or rather between two concepts of Fathers, the one comprising the distant, half-forgotten, and almost mythical ancestors of certain families, or of what would have been to the poets of the Veda, the whole human race, the other consisting of the fathers who had but lately departed, and who were still, as it were, personally remembered and revered.

The old ancestors in general approach more nearly to the gods. They are often represented as having gone to the abode of Yama, the ruler of the departed, and to live there in company with some of the Devas.

We sometimes read of the great-grandfathers being in heaven, the grandfathers in the sky, the fathers on the earth, the first in company with the Adityas, the second with the Rudras, the last with the Vasus. All these are individual poetical conceptions.

Yama himself is sometimes invoked as if he were one of the Fathers, the first of mortals that died or that trod the path of the Fathers leading to the common sunset in the West. Still his real Deva-like nature is never completely lost, and, as the god of the seeting sun, he is indeed the leader of the Fathers, but not one of the Fathers himself.

The following is from one of the hymns of the Rig-Veda by which those ancient Fathers were invited to come to their sacrifice :

1. May the Soma-loving Fathers, the lowest, the highest, and the middle, arise. May the gentle and righteous Fathers who have come to life (again) protect us in these invocations !

4. Come hither to us with your help, you Fathers who sit on the grass ! We have prepared these oblations for you, accept them ! Come hither with your most blessed protection, and give us health and wealth without fail !

5. The Soma-loving Fathers have been called hither to their dear viands which are placed on the grass. Let them approach, let them listen, let them bless, let them protect us ! X. 15.

The daily Pitriyagna, or ancestor worship, is one of the five sacrifices, sometimes called the great sacrifices, which every married man ought to perform day by day.\*

There are full descriptions of the worship due to the Fathers in the Brahmanas and Sutas. The epic poems, the law books, the Puranas, all are brimful of allusions to ancestral worship. The whole social fabric of India, with its laws of inheritance and marriage, rests on a belief in the Manes.

To the mind of a Hindu, says Professor Bhattacharyya, in his *Tugore Law Lectures* (p. 130), "Ancestor worship, in some form or other, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of what is known as the Hindu religion."

The word Sraddha does not occur in the Vedas or in the ancient Brahmanas. It is, therefore, a word of more modern origin. It is explained as that which is given in faith to Brahmins for the sake of the Fathers.†

**Chinese Ancestral Worship.**—The dead are supposed, by the Chinese, to be dependent upon the living for food, clothing, and money: These are presented at certain times, especially in the third month of the year. The Hindus offer to the dead pindas, or balls of rice. The Chinese give them the food which they themselves like best,—boiled pork, fowls, ducks, tea, &c., which they afterwards consume themselves or give to the poor. Clothing, chairs, tables, horses, &c. are made of paper and burnt. Round pieces of papers, of the size of dollars, are thinly covered with tin or some other metal, and burnt. Paper man-servants and maid-servants are similarly supplied. The Chinese are foolish enough to believe that their ancestors will get these things in reality in another world.

## SACRIFICIAL IMPLEMENTS, ETC.

Divine powers are ascribed in the hymns to various objects. A hymn to the Yupa, or sacrificial post, is quoted in the selections.

The weapons of war form the subject of hymn 75, Book VI. The arrow is thus addressed :

16. "Loosed from the bow-string fly away, thou arrow, sharpened by our prayer,  
Go to the foemen, strike them home, and let not one be left alive."

The ladle, a kind of large spoon, likewise receives great honour. "We revile not the ladle, which is of exalted race; verily we assert the dignity of the wooden implement. The ladle has established the sky."

The mortar is thus addressed : "O sovran of the forest, as the wind blows soft in front of thee, Mortar, for Indra press thou forth the Soma-juice that he may drink." I. 28, 6. The sacrificial grass is said to support heaven and earth, and wonderful attributes are predicated of Vasa, the cow. There is a hymn professedly addressed to frogs, which is quoted in the selections. It concludes with thanks for riches bestowed, and prayer for prolongation of life. VII. 108.

## THE GODS NOT MENTIONED IN THE VEDAS.

Many of the principal gods now worshipped by the Hindus, says Professor Wilson, are either wholly unnamed in the Veda, or are noticed in an inferior and different capacity. The names of SIVA, of MAHADEVA, of DURGA, of KALI, of RAMA, of KRISHNA, never occur, as far as we are yet aware; we have a RUDRA, who, in after times, is identified with SIVA, but who, even in the *Puranas*, is of very doubtful origin and identification, whilst in the *Veda* he is described as the father of the winds, and is evidently a form of either AGNI or INDRA. There is not the slightest allusion to the form in which for the last ten centuries at least, he (Siva) seems to have been almost exclusively worshipped in India—that of the *Linga* : neither is there the slightest hint of another important feature of later Hinduism, the *Trimurthi*, or Tri-une combination of BRAHMA, VISHNU, and SIVA as typified by the mystical syllable *Om*.\*

The gods now chiefly worshipped by the Hindus were the inventions of later times. Sir A. C. Lyall explains, in his *Asiatic Studies*, how the worship of new gods sprang up. A man, looked upon as holy, when he died, had a shrine set up in his honour. If he was supposed to make a few good cures at the outset, especially among women and valuable cattle, his reputation spread through the country. "This," says he, "is the kind of success which has made

\* *Introduction to the Translation of the Rig-Veda*, pp. xxvi, xxvii.

the fortune of some of the most popular, the richest, and the most widely known gods in Berar, who do all the leading business." One of the richest temples in South India, Tirupati, near Madras, was set up in honour of a man named Balaji. When any local god acquired high repute, the Brahmans made him an incarnation of Vishnu or Siva.

The gods of the Hindus were, like their kings, one dynasty succeeding another.

## THE OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES OF THE VEDAS.

### Importance of Sacrifice in Vedic times.—Mr. Kuntze says :

" It is impossible to understand and appreciate the spirit of the civilization of the ancient Aryas as it is revealed in the collection of hymns called the Rik-Sanhita, without studying their sacrificial system, the soul of their civilization. No matter what hymn is read, it directly or indirectly cannot but refer to a sacrifice. Either the musical modes of the Udgata singer are mentioned, or the name of a sacrifice such as *Yajna* or *Makha*, or some prayer asking a god to partake of their sacrificial portion (*Yajniya Bhaga*) occurs. The main ground of the picture of society drawn in the Rik-Sanhita is a sacrifice.\*"

Dr. Haug has the following remarks on the supposed influence attached to sacrifice :

" The sacrifice is regarded as the means for obtaining power over this and the other world, over visible as well as invisible beings, animate as well as inanimate creatures. Who knows its proper application, and has it duly performed, is in fact looked upon as real master of the world ; or any desire he may entertain, if it be even the most ambitious, can be gratified, any object in view can be obtained by means of it. The *Yajna* (sacrifice) taken as a whole is conceived to be a kind of machinery, in which every piece must tally with the other, or a sort of large chain in which no link is allowed to be wanting, or a staircase, by which one may ascend to heaven, or as a personage endowed with all the characteristics of a human body. It exists from eternity, and proceeded from the Supreme Being (*Prajapati* or *Brahma*) along with the *Truividya*, i. e., the three-old sacred science (the Rik verses, the Samans or chants, and the Yajus or sacrificial formulas.) The creation of the world itself was even regarded as the fruit of a sacrifice performed by the Supreme Being.†

**Kinds of Offerings and Sacrifices.**—The products of the cow were offered—milk, curds, and butter. Grain was offered in different forms—fried, boiled, or as flour-balls (*pinda*). Sacrifices included goats, sheep, cows, buffaloes, horses, men—the last two being considered of the greatest value. *Somayajna* was the most frequent kind of offering. Incense was burnt, but tufts of wool and horse-dung were also used.

\* *Vicissitudes of Aryan Civilization*, pp. 21, 22.

**Times of Offering, &c.**—The central part of a house was dedicated to the gods. When a new house was entered upon, the fire was kindled for the first time by rubbing together pieces of wood, after which it was not allowed to go out. Morning and Evening devout Aryas assembled around the sacred fire. The master of the house, as *agnihotri*, made offerings to it of wood and ghee, hymns were chanted, the children joining in the chorus and the words *svah* and *vauvat* were reiterated till the roof resounded.

The new and full moons were seasons of sacrifice. The house was decorated; grass was tied over the door and about its sides.

Every four months, at the beginning of spring, the rainy season, and autumn, sacrifices were offered.

The first ripe fruits were offered, generally twice a year.

A he-goat was sacrificed once a year at the beginning of the rainy season in the house of the sacrificer.

If addition, offerings and sacrifices were made on many other occasions, some of which will be mentioned hereafter.

**Sacrificial Implements.**—Among these were the following *Yūpa*, a post to which the animal to be sacrificed was tied; pots of various kinds for holding water, for boiling milk and flesh; a wooden tub in which to keep the filtered soma juice; a knife to cut up the body of the slain animal; an axe to divide the bones; a spit to roast parts of the flesh; several kinds of wooden spoons; a cup for drinking and offering soma, &c. The *Sphya* was a piece of wood, shaped like a wooden sword, with which lines were drawn round the sacrificial ground. One of the priests had to hold it up high so long as the chief ceremonies lasted, to keep off rakshas, evil spirits.

**Sacrificers and Priests.**—In early times any one might preside at a sacrifice. The Brahman was at first simply an assistant. King Janaka asserted his right of performing sacrifices without the intervention of priests.

As great importance was attached to the hymns sung at sacrifice Brahman who committed them to memory acquired more and more power. As time advanced also, the ceremonies became more and more complicated, till at some sacrifices 16 priests were required each performing his own peculiar office.

One priest watched over the whole in a sitting posture. The duties of the different classes of priests are thus described by Max Müller

“The Adhvaryus were the priests who were intrusted with the material performance of the sacrifice. They had to measure the ground to build the altar (*Vedi*), to prepare the sacrificial vessels, to fetch wood and water, to light the fire, to bring the animal and immolate it. They formed, as it would seem, the lowest class of priests, and their acquirements were more of a practical than an intellectual character. Some of the offices which would naturally fall to the lot of the Adhvaryus were considered so degrading, that other persons besides the

priests were frequently employed in them. The Samitri, for instance, who had to slay the animal, was not a priest, he need not even be a Brahman, and the same remark applies to the Vaikartas, the butchers, and the so-called Chamasadhvaryus. The number of hymns and invocations which they had to use at the sacrifices were smaller than that of the other priests. These, however, they had to learn by heart. But as the chief difficulty consisted in the exact recitation of hymns and in the close observance of all the euphonic rules, as taught in the Pratisakhya, the Adhvaryus were allowed to mutter their hymns, so that no one at a distance could either hear or understand them. Only in cases where the Adhvaryu had to speak to other officiating priests, commanding them to perform certain duties, he was of course obliged to speak with a loud and distinct voice. All their verses and all the invocations which the Adhvaryus had to use, were collected in the ancient liturgy of the Adhvaryus together with the rules of the sacrifice. In this mixed form they exist in the Taittiriya. Afterwards the hymns were collected by themselves, separated from the ceremonial rules, and this collection is what we called the *Yajur-Veda-Sanhita*, or the prayer-book of the Adhvaryus priests.

"There were some parts of the sacrifice, which according to ancient custom, had to be accompanied by songs, hence another class of priests arose whose particular office it was to act as the chorus. This naturally took place at the most solemn sacrifices only. Though as yet we have no key as to the character of the music which the Udgatris performed, we can see from the numerous and elaborate rules, however unintelligible, that their music was more than mere chanting. The words of their songs were collected in the order of the sacrifice, and this is what we possess under the name of *Sama-Veda-Sanhita*, or the prayer book of the Udgatri priests.

"Distinct from these two classes we have a third class of priests, the Hotris, whose duty it was to recite certain hymns during the sacrifice in praise of the Deities to whom any particular act of the sacrifice was addressed. Their recitation was loud and distinct, and required the most accurate knowledge of the rules of euphony or Siksha. The Hotris, as a class, were the most highly educated order of priests. They were supposed to know both the proper pronunciation and the meaning of their hymns, the order and employment of which was taught in the Brahmanas of the Bahvrichas. But while both the Adhvaryus and Udgatris were confessedly unable to perform their duties without the help of their prayer books, the Hotris were supposed to be so well versed in the ancient sacred poetry, as contained in the ten Mandalas of the Rig-Veda, that no separate prayer-book or Sanhita was ever arranged for their special benefit.

"The Hotri learnt, from the Brahmana, or in later times, from the Sutra, what special duties he had to perform. He knew from these sources the beginnings or the names of the hymns which he had to recite at every part of the service.

"The most ancient name for a priest by profession was *Purohita*, which only means one placed before. The original occupation of the Purohita may simply have been to perform the usual sacrifices; but, with

political power. Thus we read in the Aitariya-Brahmana: Breath do not leave him before time; he lives to an old age; he goes to his full time and does not die again, who has a Brahman as guardian of his land, Purohita. He conquers power by power; obtains strength by strength; the people obey him, peaceful and of one mind.”\*

A few of the principal offerings and sacrifices will now be described.

### SOMA.

Soma juice was an essential part of every offering of importance. Dr. Rajendralala Mitra says that it was made with the expressed juice of a creeper, diluted with water, mixed with barley meal, clarified butter, and the meal of wild paddy, and fermented in a jar for nine days. It may be concluded that a beverage prepared by the vinous fermentation of barley meal, should have strong intoxicating effects, and it is not remarkable, therefore, that the Vedas should frequently refer to the exhilaration produced by its use on men and gods.†

The Aryans were fond of the Soma themselves. It is thus described: “O Soma, poured out for Indra to drink, flow purely in a most sweet and most exhilarating current.” IX. 1, 1

“We have drunk the Soma, we have become immortal, we have entered into light, we have known the gods. What can an enemy now do to us?” VIII. 48, 3.

All the gods are supposed to delight in the soma juice. The following are some extracts from the hymns:

O Soma, gladden Varuna and Mitra; cheer Indra Pavamana! Indra, Vishnu.

Cheer thou the gods, the company of Maruts: Indra, cheer might Indra to rejoicing IX. 90, 5.

“Make Vayu glad, for furtherance and bounty; cheer Varuna and Mitra as they cleanse thee.

Gladden the gods, gladden the host of Maruts; make Heaven and Earth rejoice, O God, O Soma.” IX. 97, 42.

Indra hath drunk, Agni hath drunk; all deities have drunk the fill. VII. 58, 11.

But Indra is the deity especially addicted to love of the Soma. “Even as a thirsty steer who roams the deserts may he drink eagerly the milked-out Soma.” (V. 36. 1.). “Then Indra at single draught drank the contents of thirty pails, Pails that were filled with Soma-juice.” (VIII. 66, 4). “His belly, drinking deepest draughts of soma like an ocean swells.” I. 8, 7).

After Indra has had his fill of soma, he is asked to grant cattle

\* *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 471—487 (abridged).

and horses: "Impetuous god, when thou hast drunk the Soma, enraptured send us cattle in abundance. With kine and horses satisfy this longing." (III. 50. 3, 4). Another effect was to strengthen Indra to conquer Vritra:

3. "Impetuous as a bull, he chose the Soma, and quaffed in three-fold sacrifice the juices."
5. Indra with his own great and deadly thunder smote into pieces Vritra, worst of Vritras. I. 32.

The soma juice offered to the gods was apparently poured on the bundles of kusa grass provided for them as seats. "These dripping soma juices are offered upon the sacred grass: drink them, Indra, (to recruit thy) vigour."

#### ANIMAL SACRIFICES:

The animals chiefly sacrificed were goats, sheep, cows, bullocks, buffaloes, deer, and occasionally horses. Large numbers were sometimes sacrificed. Three hundred buffaloes are mentioned as having been offered to Indra.

Modern Hindus, who now worship the cow, can scarcely believe that their Aryan forefathers sacrificed her and ate her flesh. But times without number the Vedas refer to ceremonies, called *gomedha*, in which the cow was sacrificed. Minute directions are given as to the character of the animal to be chosen. The Taittiriya Brahmana of the Yajur Veda gives the following rules:

"A thick-legged cow to Indra; a barren cow to Vishnu and Varuna; a black cow to Pushan; a cow that has brought forth only once to Yaju; a cow having two colours to Mitra and Varuna; a red cow to Indra; a white barren cow to Surya, &c."

One great sacrifice, called the *Panchasaradiya sava*, was celebrated every five years. At this seventeen young cows were immolated. "Whoever wishes to be great," says the Taittiriya Brahmana, "let him worship through the Panchasaradiya. Thereby, verily, he will be great."

"In the Asvalayana Sutra," says Dr. Mitra, "mention is made of several sacrifices of which the slaughter of cattle formed a part. One of them, in the Grihya Sutra, is worthy of special notice. It is called *Sulagava*, or 'spitted cow,' i.e., Roast Beef."

Oxen were sacrificed as well as cows. The Taittiriya Brahmana prescribes: "A dwarf ox to Vishnu; a drooping horned bull to Indra; a piebald ox to Savitri; a white ox to Mitra, &c."

Ignorant Hindus now allege that the animals were not really killed, but that after the form of sacrificing had been performed, they were allowed to go free. This statement is a pure fabrication.



tion. "Nothing," says Dr. Clark, "is more conclusive than the evidence on this point that the animal sacrificed was really killed and subsequently eaten. It was first tied to the sacrificial post after the recital of appropriate mantras and the performance of certain special rites; some kusa grass was then spread, and the animal was laid on it with its head to the west and its feet to the north." After it was killed, the Adhvaryu said, 'It is immolated (*sanjnaptā*).'

"That the animal slaughtered was intended for food," says Dr. R. Mitra, "is evident from the directions given in the *Asvalayan Sutra* to eat of the remains of the offering; but to remove all doubt on the subject I shall quote here a passage from the *Taittiriya Brahmana* in which the mode of cutting up the victim after immolation is described in detail: it is scarcely to be supposed that the animal would be so divided <sup>and easily</sup> <sup>sa-</sup> <sup>table,</sup> there was no necessity for distribution."

Only a few extracts need be <sup>ed.</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>variation</sup>

"Separate its hide so that it may remain entire. Cut open its breast so as to make it appear like an eagle (with spread wings). Separate the forearms; divide the arms into spokes; separate successively in order the 26 ribs. Dig a trench for burying the excrements. Throw away the blood to the *Rakshasas*. O slayer of cattle, O *Adhvaryu*, accomplish your task; accomplish it according to rules."

The *Gopatha Brahmana* of the *Atharva-Veda* gives in detail the names of the different individuals who are to receive shares of the meat for the parts they take in the ceremony. The following are a few of them:

"The *Prastata* is to receive the two jaws along with the tongue; the *Pratiharta*, the neck and the hump; the *Udgata*, the eagle-like wings; the *Neshta*, the right arm; the *Sadasya*, the left arm; the householder who ordains the sacrifice the two right feet: his wife, the two left feet, &c."

Diverse imprecations are hurled against those who venture to depart from this order of distribution.

Some had poor shares, but all were allowed plentiful libation of the soma beer.

**Ashvamedha.**—This rite was probably borrowed from the Scythians in Central Asia, who often sacrificed horses. The same importance was not attached to it in Vedic times as it acquired it after ages.

A year's preparation was needed for the horse sacrifice. According to the *Taittiriya Brahmana*, "ten times eighteen" domestic animals were to be sacrificed with it. Two hundred and sixty wild animals were also brought and tied to the sacrificial posts, but they were let loose after the fire had been carried round them.

The first animal sacrificed was a goat to *Pushan*. That the

horse was killed and cooked is evident from the following extract from the Rig-Veda, I. 162 :

- 11 "What from thy body which with fire is roasted, when thou  
are set upon the spit, distilleth,—  
Let not that lie on earth or grass neglected; but to the longing  
gods let all be offered.
- 12 They who observing that the horse is ready call out and say, The  
smell is good; remove it,  
And, craving meat, await the distribution,—may their approv-  
ing help promote our labour.
- 13 The trial-fork of the flesh-cooking caldron, the vessels out of  
which the broth is sprinkled,  
The warming-pots, the covers of the dishes, hooks, carving-  
boards,—all these attend the charger.
- 18 The four-and-thirty ribs of the swift charger, kin to the gods,  
the slayer's hatchet pierces.  
Cut ye with skill, so that the parts be flawless, and piece by  
piece declaring them dissect them."

This hymn would be nonsense if the horse was not really killed and cooked. Professor Wilson says :

"That the horse is to be actually immolated admits of no question; that the body was cut up into fragments is also clear; that these fragments were dressed, partly boiled, and partly roasted, is also undisputable; and although the expressions may be differently understood, yet there is little reason to doubt that part of the flesh was eaten by the assistants, part presented as a burnt offering to the gods."\*

The horse, however, was comforted by the thought that it was going to the gods:—

- 20 "Let not thy dear soul burn thee as thou comest, let not the  
hatchet linger in thy body.  
Let not a greedy clumsy immolator, missing the joints,  
mangle thy limbs unduly.
- 21 No, here thou diest not, thou art not injured; by easy paths  
unto the gods thou goest.  
The bays, the splendid deer are now thy fellows; and to the  
ass's pole is yoked the charger."

In the Rig-Veda the object of the *Ashvamedha* is no more than as usual with other rites, the acquiring of wealth and posterity :

- 22 "May this good steed bring us all-sustaining riches, wealth in  
good kine, good horses, manly offspring.  
Freedom from sin may Aditi vouchsafe us: the steed with  
our oblations gain us lordship."

The Yajur Veda and the Satapatha Brahmana contain full directions for the performance of the sacrifice.

In the Ramayana the horse sacrifice is employed by the childless Dasaratha as the means of obtaining sons. In the Balakandam it is said that his principal queen, Kausalya, "with three strokes slew that horse, experiencing great glee. And with the view of reaping merit, Kausalya, with an undisturbed heart passed one night with that horse."\*

Wilson says :—

"In the morning, when the queen is released from this disgusting and, in fact, impossible, contiguity, a dialogue, as given in the Yajush, and in the Ashvamedha section of the Satapatha Brahmana and as explained in the Sutas, takes place between the queen and the females accompanying or attendant upon her, and the principal priests, which, though brief, is in the highest degree both silly and obscene. We find no vestige, however, of these revolting impurities in the Rig-Veda, although it is authority for practices sufficiently coarse, and such as respectable Hindus of the present generation will find it difficult to credit as forming a part of the uncreated revelations of Brahma."†

According to the Ramayana, Kausalya acquired so much merit by killing the horse and embracing it all night, that she bore Rama. Any person of intelligence can judge of the truth of this.

Not long ago, the Arya Samajists of Lahore, ignorant of its origin, printed an Urdu translation of part of Mahidhari's commentary on the Yajur Veda. They were convicted in the Appellate Court of having published obscene literature, and were fined.

A later idea was that the Ashvamedha was celebrated by a monarch desirous of universal dominion. Another fiction was that a hundred celebrations deposed Indra from the throne of Swarga and elevated the sacrificer to his place.

#### PURUSHAMEDHA, HUMAN SACRIFICES.

Human sacrifices, though now regarded with horror, were practised in ancient times by nearly all nations. The Aryan Hindus, the Greeks, Romans, Germans and Britons, once lived together speaking the same language, and following the same customs. We know that human sacrifices were offered by the Western Aryans at an early period. In England, large numbers of human beings were burnt alive in images made of wicker work. At Athens, a man and a woman were annually sacrificed to expiate the sins of the nation. The Germans sometimes immolated hundreds at a time. It is therefore very probable that the practice prevailed also among the Eastern Aryans.

\* English Translation, p. 38.

† Introduction to Translation of the Rig-Veda. Vol. II. p. xiii.

The subject has been carefully investigated by Dr. Rajendralala Mitra, the most distinguished Indian scholar of modern times, in a paper originally published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Some maintain that human sacrifices are not authorised in the Vedas, but were introduced in later times. Dr. R. Mitra says : "As a Hindu writing on the actions of my forefathers—remote as they are—it would have been a source of great satisfaction to me if I could adopt this conclusion as true ; but I regret I cannot do so consistently with my allegiance to the cause of history."

His paper on the subject occupies 84 pages in his *Indo-Aryans*, giving numerous quotations both in Sanskrit and English. The following is only a brief summary. Dr. R. Mitra first describes the prevalence of human sacrifices in all parts of the world, both in ancient and modern times. He adds : "Benign and humane as was the spirit of the ancient Hindu religion, it was not all opposed to animal sacrifice ; on the contrary, most of the principal rites required the immolation of large numbers of various kinds of beasts and birds. One of the rites enjoined required the performer to walk deliberately into the depth of the ocean to drown himself to death. This was called *Mahaprasthana*, and is forbidden in the present age. Another, an expiatory one, required the sinner to burn himself to death, on a blazing pyre—the *Tushanala*. This has not yet been forbidden. The gentlest of beings, the simple-minded women of Bengal, were for a long time in the habit of consigning their first-born babes to the sacred river Ganges at Sagar Island, and this was preceded by a religious ceremony, though it was not authorised by any of the ancient rituals. If the spirit of the Hindu religion has tolerated, countenanced or promoted such acts, it would not be by any means unreasonable or inconsistent, to suppose that it should have, in primitive times, recognised the slaughter of human beings as calculated to appease, gratify, and secure the grace of the gods."

But to turn from presumptive evidence to the facts recorded in the Vedas. The earliest reference to human sacrifice occurs in the first book of the Rig-Veda. It contains seven hymns supposed to have been recited by one Sunahsepa when he was bound to a stake preparatory to being immolated. The story is given in the Aitareya Brahmana of the Rig-Veda. see Page 33, 184, 185

Harischandra had made a vow to sacrifice his first-born to Varuna, if that deity would bless him with children. A child was born, named Rohita, and Varuna claimed it ; but the father evaded fulfilling his promise under various pretexts until Rohita, grown up to man's estate, ran away from home, when Varuna afflicted the father with dropsy. At last Rohita purchased one Sunahsepa from his father Ajigarta for a hundred cows. When Sunahsepa had been prepared, they found nobody to bind him to the sacrificial

shall bind him." They gave him another hundred cows, and he bound him. When Sunahsepa had been prepared and bound when the Apri hymns had been sung, and he had been led round the fire, they found nobody to kill him. Next Ajigarta said "Give me another hundred, and I shall kill him." They gave him another hundred cows, and he came whetting the knife. Sunahsepa then recited the hymns praising Agni, Indra, Mitra, Varuna, and other gods. He says:—

13. "Bound to three pillars captured Sunahsepa thus to the Aditya made his supplication.

Him may the sovran Varuna deliver, wise, ne'er deceived, looser the bonds that bind him." I. 24.

Varuna, pleased with the hymns of Sunahsepa, set him free. Disgusted with his father, he forsook him, and became the adopted son of Visvamitra, his maternal uncle.

This story shows that human sacrifices were really offered. I Harischandra had simply to tie his son to a post and after repeating a few mantras over him, let him off perfectly sound, he could easily have done so. "The running away of the son from his father would also be unmeaning; the purchase of a substitute stupid; the payment of a fee of a hundred head of cattle to undertake the butcher's work quite supererogatory; and the sharpening of the knife by Ajigarta a vain preliminary." Dr. R. Mitra adds "Seeing that, until the beginning of this century, the practice of offering the first-born to the river Ganges was common, and the story simply says that Sunahsepa was offered to the water-god Varuna as a substitute for the first born Rohita, he can perceive nothing in it inconsistent or unworthy of belief."

This view is supported by Max Müller. He says that the story in the Aitareya Brahmana "shows that, at that early time, the Brahmans were familiar with the idea of human sacrifices, and the men who were supposed to belong to the caste of the Brahmar were ready to sell their sons for that purpose."

The *Purushamedha* was celebrated for the attainment of supremacy over all created beings. Its performance was limited to Brahmins and Kshatriyas. It could be commenced only on the tenth of the waxing moon in the month of Chaitra, and altogether required 40 days for its performance, though only 5 out of the 40 days were specially called the days of the *Purushamedha*, whence it got the name of *panchaha*. Eleven sacrificial posts were required for it and to each of them was tied an animal fit for Agni and Soma (a barren cow), the human victims being placed between the posts.

The earliest indication of this rite occurs in the *Vajasaneyi Samhita* of the White Yajur Veda. The passage in it bearing on this subject is supposed to describe the different kinds of human victims appropriate for particular gods and goddesses. The section, in which

it occurs, opens with three verses which, the commentator says, were intended to serve as mantras for offerings of human victims. Then follows a series of 179 names of gods in the dative case, each followed by the name of one or more persons in the objective case; thus: "to Brahma, a Brahmana, to the Maruts, a Vaisya," &c. The copula is nowhere given, and it is quite optional with the reader to supply whatever verb he chooses. The whole of their names occurs also in the Taittiriya Brahmana of the Black Yajur Veda, with only a few slight variations, and in some cases having the verb *alabhate* after them. This verb is formed of the root *labh*, "to kill" with the prefix *á*, and commentators have generally accepted the term to mean slaughter, though in some cases it means consecration before slaughter.

Dr. R. Mitra quotes the 179 names in full, and gives long explanatory extracts from the Brahmanas and Apastambha. He arrives at the following conclusion: "Probably the number originally sacrificed was few, and that when the rite became emblematic, the number was increased in confirmation of some liturgical theory, particularly as it did not involve any trouble or difficulty. But whether so or not, certain it is that at one time or other men were immolated for the gratification of some divinity or other in this rite or its prototype."

The presumption is strong that the real sacrifice belonged to the Sanhita, and the Brahmana divested it of its hideousness and cruelty and made it emblematic, even as the Vaishnavas have, within the last five or six hundred years, replaced the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes to Chandika by that of pumpkins and sugar-cane.

Nor is the Purushamedha the only sacrifice at which human sacrifices were ordained. The Ashvamedha, or horse sacrifice, required the immolation of a human being just as much as the former, and hence it is that the horse sacrifice was prohibited in the Kali Yuga along with it.

The Satapatha Brahmana, in another passage, has a verse which is remarkable for the manner in which the human victim is therein referred to. It says, "Let a fire offering be made with the head of a man. The offering is the rite itself (*Yajna*); therefore does it make a man part of the sacrificial animals; and hence it is that among animals man is included in sacrifice."

Passing from the Brahmanas to the Itihasas, we have ample evidence to show that the rite of Purushamedha was not unknown to their authors. The Institutes of Manu affords the same evidence, but it would seem that when it came into currency, the rite was looked upon with horror, and so it was prohibited as unfit to be performed in the present age.

But while the Puranas suppressed the Purushamedha they afford abundant indications of another rite requiring the immolation

human sacrifice to the goddess Chamunda, or Chandika,—a dark, fierce sanguinary divinity.

The Kalika Purana says: "By a human sacrifice attended by the forms laid down, Devi remains gratified for a thousand years, and by a sacrifice of three men one hundred thousand years." A human sacrifice is described as *atibali* (highest sacrifice.) "The fact is well known," says Dr. R. Mitra, "that for a long time the rite was common all over Hindustan; and persons are not wanting who suspect that there are still nooks and corners in India where human victims are occasionally slaughtered for the gratification of the Devi."

"Apart from the sacrifices enjoined in the Sastras, there used, in former times, to be offered human victims to several *dii minores* (inferior gods) by way of expiations or good-will offerings whenever a newly excavated tank failed to produce sufficient water, or a temple or building cracked, accidents which were attributed to malevolent divinities, who generally yielded to the seductive influence of sanguinary offerings."

"The offering of one's own blood to the goddess is a mediæval and modern rite. It is made by women, and there is scarcely a respectable house in all Bengal, the mistress of which has not, at one time or other, shed her blood under the notion of satisfying the goddess by the operation. Whenever her husband or a son is dangerously ill, a vow is made that, on the recovery of the patient, the goddess would be regaled with human blood, and in the first Durga Puja following, or at the temple at Kalighat, or at some other sacred fane, the lady performs certain ceremonies, and then bares her breast in the presence of the goddess, and with a nail-cutter (*naruna*) draws a few drops of blood from between her breasts, and offers them to the divinity."

Dr. R. Mitra gives the following summary of the conclusions which may be fairly drawn from the facts cited above:

1st. That looking to the history of human civilization and the ritual of the Hindus, there is nothing to justify the belief that in ancient times the Hindus were incapable of sacrificing human beings to their gods.

2nd. That the Sunahsepa hymns of the Rik Sanhita most probably refer to a human sacrifice.

3rd. That the Aitareya Brahmana refers to an actual and not a typical human sacrifice.

4th. That the Purushamedha originally required the actual sacrifice of men.

5th. That the Satapatha Brahmana sanctions human sacrifice in some cases, but makes the Purushamedha emblematic.

6th. That the Taittiriya Brahmana enjoins the sacrifice of a man as the Horse Sacrifice.

7th. That the Puranas recognise human sacrifices to Chandikā, but

8th. That the Tantras enjoin human sacrifices to Chandika, and require that when human victims are not available, the effigy of a human being should be sacrificed to her.

#### REACTION AGAINST SACRIFICES.

There have been many changes in the religious beliefs and practices of the Hindus. They have changed their gods again and again, as has been already shown; Dyaus, Varuna, Agni, Indra, now being superseded by Vishnu, Siva, Rama, and Krishna.

Their practices have also changed. When the Aryans entered the Punjab, they were largely a pastoral people, their flocks and herds affording a large proportion of their food. It has been shown that the Aryans in Vedic times ate beef and drank freely the intoxicating soma beer. Much of their time was spent in fighting with the aborigines, whose fields and cattle they sought to take. Indra, supposed to be strong in battle, was therefore the principal god.

By degrees the Aryans were settled in peaceful possession of the country, the aborigines having either retired to the mountains or been reduced to slavery. The Aryans became milder than their forefathers. Instead of considering beef the best of food and delighting in soma beer, they began to think that no life should be taken, and that no intoxicating liquors should be tasted.

The new doctrine of transmigration arose, unknown to the Vedic Aryans, who did not believe that at death they passed from one body to another. This was a strong reason against the use of meat. A man's grandmother might become a sheep, and, if killed, he might eat her.

Animal worship, which sprang up, was another influence. The old Aryans worshipped chiefly the heavenly bodies; they did not look upon cows as sacred, but killed and ate them freely. For a people to eat their gods, seemed as wicked as to eat their parents.

The chief leader in the movement against sacrifices and the use of soma beer, was Gautama Buddha, the son of an Indian Raja, who lived about 2,400 years ago. His first command was, "Thou shalt not take any life." This referred to life of any kind. His priests were forbidden even to pluck up any vegetable, which was supposed to have life like animals, and into which a person might pass in another birth. The following was one argument used by the Buddhists against sacrifices. The Vedic hymns say that animals sacrificed went to heaven. A man should therefore sacrifice his father, because he would go to heaven!

Another command of Buddha was, "Thou shalt not taste any intoxicating drink." The evils of drunkenness began to be felt, and though the Rig-Veda has 114 hymns in praise of the soma beer.



its use was given up by the great body of the Hindus, though some tribes have retained their drinking habits.

The changes which Buddha advocated were largely carried out by the influence of Asoka, the powerful king of Magadha, whose empire extended from Bengal to the borders of Afghanistan. He reigned from about B. C. 260 to 220. There are rock inscriptions which he caused to be made in different parts of India. One of them is as follows: "This is the edict of the beloved of the gods, the Raja Piyadasi. The putting to death of animals is to be entirely discontinued."

The reaction can be gradually traced. Panini, the grammarian, says that there are old and new Brahmanas. The Aitareya Brahmana of the Rig-Veda, supposed to be the oldest, refers to sacrifices as really offered. The Satapatha Brahmana in some cases attempts to spiritualize them away. Animals and men were let loose after being tied to the sacrificial posts. Some of the leading doctrines of Buddha were adopted by the Brahmans, and the slaying of animals, even in sacrifice, became revolting to them. When Manu's Code was compiled, things were partly in a transition stage, and it is inconsistent. It says:

"22. The prescribed beasts and birds are to be slain by Brahmans for the sacrifice; and also for the support of dependents; for Agastya did (so) formerly.

"23. There were, indeed, offerings of eatable beasts and birds in the ancient sacrifices and in the oblations of Brahmans and Kshatriyas." Bk. V.

On the other hand it says:

"46. He who desires not to cause confinement, death, and pain to living beings, (but is) desirous of the good of all, gets endless happiness." V.

The superiority of not eating flesh to sacrifices is thus shown:—

"53. He who for a hundred years sacrifices every year with a horse-sacrifice, and he who eats not flesh, the fruit of the virtue of both is equal." V.

Animal sacrifices are declared to have passed away, and others are substituted:

"84. All the Vedic rites, oblational (and) sacrificial, pass away; but this imperishable syllable *Om* is to be known to Brahma and also Prajapati."

"85. The sacrifice of muttering (this word, &c.) is said to be better by tenfold than the regular sacrifice; if inaudible, it is a hundredfold (better); and a thousandfold, if mental." II.

The "five great sacrifices ordered for householders every day by the great seers" were:

"70. Teaching the Veda, the Veda sacrifice; offering cakes and water, the sacrifice to the manes; an offering to fire, the sacrifice to the

gods; offering of food, to all beings; honour to guests, the sacrifice to men." III.

The Vaishnava worship has had a considerable influence in putting a stop to animal sacrifices. It has been mentioned that within the last five or six centuries the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes, even to Chandika, has been replaced by pumpkins and sugar-cane.

Goats and buffaloes are still offered to Kali, but the image of a man, after the ceremony of *pranpratishta*, is substituted for a human being.

#### SUMMARY OF THE BOOKS.

Max Müller gives the following taken from Saunaka's Anukramanis:

Mandalas.			Anuvākas.		Hymns.
The	1st	contains	24	and	191
"	2nd	"	4	"	43
"	3rd	"	5	"	62
"	4th	"	5	"	58
"	5th	"	6	"	87
"	6th	"	6	"	75
"	7th	"	6	"	104
"	8th	"	10	"	92 (+ 11 Valakhalyas.)
"	9th	"	7	"	114
"	10th	"	12	"	191

The 10 have 85 and 1017 + 11 = 1028.

The Bashkala-sakha had 8 hymns more = 1025 hymns.\*

Each Mandala will be noticed separately, and some of the most remarkable passages and hymns will be quoted in full.

#### MANDALA I.

This is called the book of the Satarchins, that is of a hundred or a large indefinite number of authors of verses.

Of the hymns 44 are specially addressed to Indra, 43 to Agni, 15 to the Asvins, 11 to the Maruts, 9 to the Visvedevas, 4 each to Ushas and the Ribhus, 3 to Heaven and Earth, &c. Other hymns are addressed to gods conjointly, as Indra and Agni, Mitra and Varuna. Two hymns are addressed to the Horse, one is in praise of Food.

The first hymn, addressed to Agni, is given in full in Nagri, Roman, and in the English translation by Griffith. The author of it and the following hymn was Madhuchchhandas Vaisvamitra, a son or descendant of Visvamitra.

॥ ओम् ॥

1. अग्निमीले पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम् ।  
Agnimilē purōhitaṁ yajñasya dēvamṛtvijam |  
होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥  
Hōtaraṁ ratnadhatamaṁ ||
2. अग्निः पूर्वेभि ऋषिभिरिद्धो नूतनैरुत ।  
Agniḥ pūrvebhi ṛṣibhiridhyō nūtanairuta |  
स देवां एह वक्षति ॥  
Sa dēvaṁ ēha vakṣati ||
3. अग्निना रयिमश्वत्पोषमेव दिवेदिवे ।  
Agninaḥ rayimaśnavatpōṣameva divēdivē |  
यशसं वीरवत्तमम् ॥  
Yaśasaṁ vīravattamaṁ ||
4. अग्ने यं यज्ञमध्वरं विश्वतः परिभूरसि ।  
Agnē yaṁ yajñamadhvaraṁ viśvataḥ paribhūrasi |  
स इदेवेषु गच्छति ॥  
Sa iddēvesu gacchati ||
5. अग्निर्होता कविक्रतुः सत्यश्चित्रश्रवस्तमः ।  
Agnirhōtā kavikratuḥ satyaścitra śravastamah |  
देवो देवेभिरागपत् ॥  
Dēvō devēbhi rāgamat ||
6. यदाङ्ग दाशुषे त्वमग्ने भद्रं करिष्यसि ।  
Yadaṅga dāśuṣē tvamagnē bhadraṁ kariṣyasi |  
तवेत्तत्सत्यमङ्गिरः ।  
Tavēttatsatyamaṅgiraḥ ||
7. उपत्वाग्ने दिवेदिवे दोषावस्तर्धिया वयम् ।  
Upatvagnē divēdivē dōṣavastardhiya vayam |  
नमो भरन्त एमसि ॥  
Namō bharanta ēmasi ||
8. राजन्तमध्वराणां गोपामतस्य दीदिविम् ।  
Rajantamadhvarāṇāṁ gōpāmṛtasya dīdivim |  
वर्धमानं स्वे दमे ॥  
Vardhamānaṁ sve damē ||

9. स नः पितेव सूनवेऽग्ने सुपायनो भव ।

Sa naḥ pitēva sūnavo<sup>8</sup>gnē sūpāyanō bhava ।

स च खानः स्वस्तये ॥

Sa ca svaṇaḥ svastayē ॥

1. I laud Agni, the great high priest, god, minister of sacrifice,  
The herald, lavishest of wealth.
2. Worthy is Agni to be praised by living as by ancient seers :  
He shall bring hitherward the gods.
3. Through Agni man obtaineth wealth, yea, plenty waxing day by  
day,  
Most rich in heroes, glorious.
4. Agni, the flawless sacrifice, which thou encompasssest about  
Verily goeth to the gods.
5. May Agni, sapient-minded priest, truthful, most gloriously great,  
The god, come hither with the gods.
6. Whatever blessing, Agni, thou wilt grant unto thy worshipper,  
That, Angiras,\* is thy true gift.
7. To thee, dispeller of the night, O Agni, day by day with prayer,  
Bringing thee reverence, we come ;
8. Ruler of sacrifices, guard of Law eternal, radiant one,  
Increasing in thine own abode.
9. Be to us easy of approach, even as a father to his son :  
Agni, be with us for our weal.

## 2. HYMN TO VAYU.

1. Beautiful Vayu come, for thee these Soma-drops have been  
prepared :  
Drink of them, hearken to our call.
2. Knowing the days, with Soma-juice poured forth, the singers call  
to thee,  
O Vayu, with their hymns of praise.
3. Vayu, thy penetrating voice goes forth unto the worshipper,  
Far-spreading for the Soma draught.
4. Here, Indra-Vayu, is the juice ; come for our offered dainties'  
sake :  
The drops are yearning for you both.
5. Vayu and Indra, well ye know libations, rich in sacred rites !  
So come ye hither rapidly.
6. Vayu and Indra, come to what the Soma-presser hath prepared :  
Soon, heroes, even with resolve.
7. Mitra, of holy strength, I call, and foe-destroying Varuna,  
Who make the oil-fed rite complete.
8. Mitra and Varuna, through Law, lovers and cherishers of Law,  
Have ye obtained your mighty power.
9. Our sages, Mitra-Varuna, of wide dominion, strong by birth,  
Vouchsafe us strength that worketh well.

\* A name of Agni.

## Hymn 20. RIBHUS.

1. For the celestial race this song of praise which gives wealth  
lavishly  
Was made by singers with their lips.
2. They who for Indra, with their mind, formed horses harnesses  
by a word,  
Attained by works to sacrifice.
3. They for the two Nasatyas\* wrought a light car moving ever  
way :  
They formed a nectar-yielding cow.
4. The Ribhus with effectual prayers, honest, with constant labour  
made  
Their sire and mother young again.
5. Together came your gladdening drops with Indra by the Marut  
girl,  
With the Adityas, with the kings.
6. The sacrificialladle, wrought newly by the god Twashtar's hand-  
Four ladles have ye made thereof.
7. Vouchsafe us wealth, to him who pours thrice seven libation  
yea, to each  
Give wealth, pleased with our eulogies.
8. As ministering priests they held, by pious acts they won them  
selves,  
A share in sacrifice with gods.

## Hymn 22. GODDESSES.

[This hymn is addressed to the Asvins and others. The verses referring to the goddesses are quoted.]

9. O Agni, hither bring to us the willing spouses of the gods,  
And Twashtar, to the Soma-draught.
10. Most youthful Agni, hither bring their spouses, Hotra, Bharat  
Varutri, Dhishana, for aid
11. Spouses of heroes, goddesses, with whole wings may they come  
to us.  
With great protection and with aid.
12. Indrani, Varunani, and Agnayi hither I invite,  
For weal to drink the Soma-juice.

## Hymn 25. VARUNA.

[This is one of the hymns addressed by Sunahsepa to Varuna, who is bound to the sacrificial post. (See page 61.)]

1. Whatever law of thine, O god, O Varuna, as we are men,  
Day after day we violate.
2. Give us not as a prey to death, to be destroyed by thee in wrath  
To thy fierce anger when displeased.

---

\* The Asvins.

3. To gain thy mercy, Varuna, with hymns we bind thy heart,  
as binds  
The charioteer his tethered horse.
4. They flee from me dispirited, bent only on obtaining wealth,  
As to their nests the birds of air.
5. When shall we bring, to be appeased, the hero, lord of warrior  
might,  
Him, the far-seeing Varuna ?
6. This, this with joy, they both accept in common : never do they fail  
The ever-faithful worshipper.
7. He knows the path of birds that fly through heaven, and, sovran  
of the sea,  
He knows the ships that are thereon.
8. True to his holy law, he knows the twelve moons with their  
progeny\* :  
He knows the moon of later birth.
9. He knows the pathway of the wind, the spreading, high, and  
mighty wind :  
He knows the gods who dwell above,
10. Varuna, true to holy law, sits down among his people ; he,  
Most wise, sits there to govern all.
11. From thence perceiving he beholds all wondrous things, both  
what hath been,  
And what hereafter will be done.
12. May that Aditya, very wise, make fair paths for us all our days:  
May he prolong our lives for us.
13. Varuna, wearing golden mail, hath clad him in a shining robe :  
His spies are seated round about.
14. The god whom enemies threaten not, nor those who tyrannise  
o'er men,  
Nor those whose minds are bent on wrong.
15. He who gives glory to mankind, not glory that is incomplete,  
To our own bodies giving it.
16. Yearning for the wide-seeing one, my thoughts move onward  
unto him.  
As kine unto their pastures move.
17. Once more together let us speak, because my meath† is brought :  
priest-like,  
Thou eatest what is dear to thee.
18. Now saw I him whom all may see, I saw his car above the earth:  
He hath accepted these my songs.
19. Varuna, hear this call of mine : be gracious unto us this day :  
Longing for help I cried to thee.
20. Thou, O wise god, art lord of all, thou art the king of earth and  
heaven :  
Hear, as thou goest on thy way.
21. Release us from the upper bond, untie the bond between and  
loose,  
The bonds below, that I may live.

---

\* The days. † Usually *mead*, a sweet liquor.

Hymn 42. PUSHAN.

1. Shorten our ways, O Pushan, move aside obstruction in the path  
Go close before us, cloud-born god.
2. Drive, Pushan, from our road the wolf, the wicked inauspicious  
wolf,\*  
Who lies in wait to injure us.
3. Who lurks about the path we take, the robber with a guileful  
heart:  
Far from the road chase him away.
4. Tread with thy foot and trample out the firebrand of the wicked  
one,  
The double-tongued, whose'er he be.
5. Wise Pushan, wonder-worker, we claim of thee now the a  
where-with  
Thou furtheredst our sires of old.
6. So, lord of all prosperity, best wielder of the golden sword,  
Make riches easy to be won.
7. Past all pursuers lead us, make pleasant our path and fair  
tread: O Pushan, find thou power for this.
8. Lead us to meadows rich in grass: send on our way no early heat  
O Pushan, find thou power for this,
9. Be gracious to us, fill us full, give, feed us, and invigorate:  
O Pushan, find thou power for this.
10. No blame have we for Pushan; him we magnify with songs  
praise:  
We seek the mighty one for wealth.

Hymn 90. VISVEDEVAS.

1. May Varuna with guidance straight, and Mitra lead us, he who  
knows,  
And Aryaman in accord with gods,
2. For they are dealers forth of wealth, and, not deluded, with their  
might  
Guard evermore the holy laws.
3. Shelter may they vouchsafe to us, immortal gods to mortal men  
Chasing our enemies away.
4. May they mark out our paths to bliss, Indra, the Maruts, Pushan  
and Bhaga, the gods to be adored.
5. Yea, Pushan, Vishnu, ye who run your course, enrich our hymns  
with kine;  
Bless us with all prosperity.
6. The winds waft sweets, the rivers pour sweets for the man who  
keeps the law:  
So may the plants be sweet for us.
7. Sweet be the night and sweet the dawn, sweet the terrestrial  
atmosphere;  
Sweet be our father Heaven to us.

---

\* It signifies also any godless wicked man.

8. \* Vanaspati\* be full of sweets for us, and full of sweets the Sun :  
May our milch-kine be sweet for us.
9. Be Mitra gracious unto us, and Varuna, and Aryaman :  
Indra, Brihaspati, be kind, and Vishnu of the mighty stride.

## Hymn 103. INDRA.†

1. That highest Indra-power of thine is distant ; that which is here  
sages possessed aforetime.  
This one is on the earth, in heaven the other, and both unite as  
flag and flag in battle.
2. He spread the wide earth out and firmly fixed it, smote with his  
thunderbolt and loosed the waters.  
Maghavan with his puissance struck down Ahi, rent Raubina†  
to death, and slaughtered Vyansa.
3. Armed with his bolt and trusting in this prowess he wandered  
shattering the Dasas' cities §  
Cast thy dart, knowing, thunderer, at the Dasyu ; increase the  
Arya's might and glory, Indra.
4. For him who thus hath taught these human races, Maghavan,  
bearing a fame-worthy title,  
Thunderer, drawing nigh to slay the Dasyus, hath given him-  
self the name of son for glory.
5. See this abundant wealth that he possesses, and put your trust in  
Indra's hero vigour.  
He found the cattle, and he found the horses, he found the plants,  
the forests, and the waters.
6. To him the truly strong, whose deeds are many, to him the strong  
bull let us pour the Soma.  
The hero watching like a thief in ambush goes parting the poss-  
essions of the godless.
7. Well didst thou do that hero deed, O Indra, in waking with thy  
bolt the slumbering Ahi.  
In thee, delighted dames divine rejoiced them, the flying Maruts  
and all gods were joyful.
8. As thou hast smitten Sushna, Pipru, Vritra and Kuyava,  
and Sambara's forts, O Indra.  
This prayer of ours may Varuna grant, and Mitra, and Aditi and  
Sindhu, Earth and Heaven.

## Hymn 115. SURYA.

1. The brilliant presence of the gods hath risen, the eye of Mitra,  
Varuna, and Agni.  
The soul of all that moveth not or moveth, the Sun hath filled the  
air and earth and heaven.

---

\* "The lord of the forest," here perhaps the deified sacrificial post.

† See the account of Indra page 34.

‡ Said to be a demon of drought : a dark cloud that withholds the rain.

§ The forts of the Dasyus, the aborigines.



2. Like as a young man followeth a maiden, so doth the Sun the Dawn, refulgent goddess :
3. When pious men extend their generations, before the auspicious one for happy fortune.  
Auspicious are the Sun's bay-coloured horses, bright, changing hues, meet for our shouts of triumph.  
Bearing our prayers, the sky's ridge have they mounted, and in a moment speed round earth and heaven.
4. This is the godhead, this the might of Surya ; he hath with-drawn what spread o'er work unfinished.  
When he hath loosed his horses from their station, straight over all Night spreadeth out her garment.
5. In the sky's lap the Sun this form assumeth for Mitra and for Varuna to look on.  
His bay steeds well maintain his power eternal, at one time bright and darksome at another.
6. Thisday, O gods, while Surya is ascending, deliver us from trouble and dishonour.  
This prayer of ours may Varuna grant, and Mitra, and Aditi and Sindhu, Earth and Heaven.

### Hymn 126. THE PRAISES OF BHAVYA.

[The hymn writer, Kakshivan, fell asleep on a journey. He was aroused in the morning by Raja Svanaya who took him home and gave him at once his ten daughters in marriage, presenting him at the same time with the gifts mentioned in the hymn. The poet praises the liberality of Svanaya, here called Bhavya, from his father Bhava.]

1. With wisdom I present these lively praises of Bhavya dweller on the bank of Sindhu ;  
For he, unconquered king, desiring glory, hath furnished me a thousand sacrifices.
2. A hundred necklets from the king, beseeching, a hundred gift-steeds I at once accepted ;  
Of the lord's cows a thousand, I Kakshivan. His deathless glory hath he spread to heaven.
3. Horses of dusky colour stood beside me, ten chariots, Svanaya's gift, with mares to draw them.  
Kine numbering sixty thousand followed after. Kakshivan gained them when the days were closing.
4. Forty bay horses of the ten cars' master before a thousand lead the long procession.  
Reeling in joy Rakshivan's sons and Pajra's have groomed the coursers decked with pearly trappings.
5. An earlier gift for you have I accepted eight cows, good milkers and three harnessed horses,  
Pajras, who with your wains with your great kinsman like troops of subjects have been fain for glory.\*

---

\* The hymn ends with two verses, supposed to be part of a love song. They are omitted as indecent. Hymn 179 is omitted for the same reason.

## Hymn 138. PUSHAN.

1. Strong Pushan's majesty is lauded evermore, the glory of his lordly might is never faint, his song of praise is never faint.  
Seeking felicity I laud him nigh to help, the source of bliss,  
Who, vigorous one, hath drawn to him the hearts of all, drawn them, the vigorous one, the god.
2. Thee, then O Pushan, like a swift one on his way, I urge with lauds that thou mayst make the foemen flee, drive, camel-like, our foes afar.  
As I, a man, call thee, a god, giver of bliss, to be my friend,  
So make our loudly-chanted praises glorious, in battles make them glorious.
3. Thou, Pushan, in whose friendship they who sing forth praise enjoy advantage, even in wisdom through thy grace, in wisdom even they are advanced.  
So, after this most recent course, we come to thee with prayers for wealth.  
Not stirred to anger, O wide-ruler come to us, come thou to us in every fight.
4. Not stirred to anger, come, free-giver, nigh to us, to take this gift of ours, thou who hast goats for steeds, goat-borne! their gift who long for fame,  
So, wonder-worker! may we turn thee hither with effectual lauds.  
I slight thee not, O Pushan, thou resplendent one : thy friendship may not be despised.

## Hymn 156. VISHNU.

1. Far shining, widely famed, going thy wonted way, fed with the oil, be helpful, Mitra-like, to us,  
So, Vishnu, e'en the wise must swell thy song of praise, and he who hath oblations pay thee solemn rites.
2. He who brings gifts to him the ancient and the last, to Vishnu who ordains, together with his spouse,  
Who tells the lofty birth of him the lofty one, shall verily surpass in glory e'en his peer.
3. Him have ye satisfied, singers, as well ye know, primeval germ of Order even from his birth.  
Ye, knowing e'en his name have told it forth ; may we, Vishnu, enjoy the grace of thee the mighty one.
4. The sovran Varuna and both the Asvins wait on this the will of him who guides the Marut host.  
Vishnu hath power supreme and might that finds the day, and with his friend unbars the stable of the kine.
5. Even he the heavenly one who came for fellowship, Vishnu to Indra, godly to the godlier,  
Who, maker, throned in three worlds, helps the Aryan man, and gives the worshipper his share of hol<sup>y</sup> law

## Hymn 187. ANNASTUTI, PRAISE OF FOOD.

[“According to Saunaka, this hymn should be recited by a person about to eat, when his food will never disagree with him; its repetition accompanied with oblations and worship, will secure him against want of food, and if he should have taken poison, its silent repetition will act as antidote.”—WILSON.]

1. Now will I glorify Food that upholds great strength,  
By whose invigorating power Trita (Indra) rent Vritra limb from limb.
2. O pleasant Food, O Food of meath, thee have we chosen for our own,  
So be our kind protector thou.
3. Come hitherward to us, O Food, auspicious with auspicious health-bringing, not unkind, a dear and guileless friend.
4. These juices which, O Food, are thine throughout the regions are diffused.  
Like winds they have their place in heaven.
5. These gifts of thine, O Food, O Food most sweet to taste,  
These savours of thy juices work like creatures that haughty mighty necks.
6. In thee, O Food, is set the spirit of great gods.  
Under thy flag brave deeds were done; he slew the dragon with thy help.
7. If thou be gone unto the splendour of the clouds,  
Even from thence, O Food of meath, prepared for our enjoyment come.
8. Whatever morsel we consume from waters or from plants on earth, O Soma, wax thou fat thereby,
9. What, Soma, we enjoy from thee in milky-food or barley-bread vatapi (the body) grow thou fat thereby.
10. O Vegetable, cake of meal, be wholesome, firm, and strengthen us.  
Vatapi, grow thou fat thereby.
11. O Food, from thee as such have we drawn forth with laids, like cows, our sacrificial gifts,  
From thee who banquetest with gods, from thee who banquet with us.

## MANDALA II.

This book contains only 43 hymns. It is commonly called the Book of Gritsamada, as nearly all the hymns are ascribed to that Rishi.

Fourteen of the hymns are addressed to Indra, two of them to the form of the Kapinjala, a kind of partridge, and nine to Agni.

## Hymn.—6 AGNI.

1. Agni, accept these logs of wood, this waiting with my prayer on thee:  
Hear graciously these songs of praise.
2. With this hymn let us honour thee, seeker of horses, son of strength,  
With this fair hymn, thou nobly born.

3. As such, lover of song, with songs, wealth-lover, giver of our wealth !  
With reverence let us worship thee.
4. Be thou for us a liberal prince, giver and lord of precious things,  
Drive those who hate us far away.
5. Such as thou art, give rain from heaven, give strength which no man may resist :  
Give food exceeding plentiful.
6. To him who lauds thee, craving help, most youthful envoy !  
through our song,  
Most holy herald ! come thou nigh.
7. Between both races, Agni, sage, well-skilled thou passest to and fro,  
As envoy friendly to mankind.
8. Befriend us thou as knowing all. Sage, duly worship thou the gods,  
And seat thee on this sacred grass.

## Hymn 28. VARUNA.

1. This laud of the self-radiant wise Aditya shall be supreme o'er all that is in greatness.  
I beg renown of Varuna the mighty, the god exceeding kind to him who worships.
2. Having extolled thee, Varuna, with thoughtful care may we have high fortune in thy service,  
Singing thy praises like the fires at coming, day after day, of mornings rich in cattle.
3. May we be in thy keeping, O thou leader, wide-ruling Varuna, lord of many heroes.  
O sons of Aditi, for ever faithful, pardon us, gods, admit us to your friendship.
4. He made them flow, the Aditya, the sustainer : the rivers run by Varuna's commandment.  
These feel no weariness, nor cease from flowing : swift have they flown like birds in air around us.
5. Loose me from sin as from a bond that binds me : may we swell, Varuna, thy spring of Order.  
Let not my thread, while I weave song, be severed, nor my work's sum, before the time, be shattered.
6. Far from me, Varuna, remove all danger : accept me graciously, thou holy sovran.  
Cast off, like cords that hold a calf, my troubles : I am not even mine eyelid's lord without thee.
7. Strike us not, Varuna with those dread weapons which, Asura, at thy bidding wound the sinner.  
Let us not pass away from light to exile. Scatter, that we may live, the men who hate us.
8. O mighty Varuna, now and hereafter, even as of old, will we speak forth our worship.

For in thyself, infallible god, thy statutes ne'er to be moved  
are fixed as on a mountain.

9. Wipe out what debts I have myself contracted ; let me not profit, king, by gain of others.  
Full many a morn remains to dawn upon us : in these, O Varuna, while we live direct us.
10. O king, whoever, be he friend or kinsman, hath threatened me affrighted in my slumber—  
If any wolf or robber fain would harm us, therefrom, O Varuna, give thou us protection.
11. May I not live O Varuna, to witness my wealthy liberal, dear friend's destitution.  
King, may I never lack well-ordered riches. Loud may we speak, with heroes, in assembly.

#### Hymn 42. INDRA IN THE FORM OF A KAPINJALA.

1. Telling his race aloud with cries repeated, he (Kapinjala) sends his voice out as his boat a steerman.  
O bird, be ominous of happy fortune : from no side may calamity befall thee.
2. Let not the falcon kill thee, nor the eagle ; let not the arrow-bearing archer reach thee.  
Still crying in the region of the Fathers, speak here auspicious, bearing joyful tidings.
3. Bringing good tidings, bird of happy omen, call thou out loudly southward of our dwellings,\*  
So that no thief, no sinner may oppress us. Loud may we speak, with heroes, in assembly.

#### MANDALA III.

This Mandala contains 62 hymns, ascribed to the Rishi Visvamitra, or to members of his family. It is said that he was born a Kshatriya, but by virtue of his intense austerities he raised himself to the Brahman caste.

The Rishis who wrote the hymns were not always friendly with one another. "Especially prominent," says Weber, "is the enmity between the families of Vasishtha and Visvamitra, which runs through all Vedic antiquity, continues to play an important part in the epic, and is kept up to the latest times ; so that, for example, a commentator of the Veda who claims to be descended from Vasishtha, leaves passages unexpounded in which the latter is stated to have had a curse imprecated upon him. This implacable hatred owes its origin to the trifling circumstance of Vasishtha having been

---

\* The Pitris are supposed to dwell in the south. The cry of birds from the quarter was regarded as auspicious.

nce appointed chief sacrificial priest instead of Visvamitra by one of the petty kings of those early times.”\*

In the Markandeya Purana, Vasishtha curses Visvamitra and turns him into a crane, while Vasishtha is changed into a starling. The two fought so furiously that the course of the universe was disturbed, and many creatures perished.

Of the hymns 22 are addressed to Indra, and 21 to Agni. This Mandala is noted as containing the Gayatri.

### Hymn 8. SACRIFICIAL POST.

[The post, to which animals to be sacrificed were tied, was regarded as deified object when consecrated, and considered to be a form of Agni.]

1. God-serving men, O sovran of the forest, with heavenly meath (ghee) at sacrifice anoint thee.  
Grant wealth to us when thou art standing upright as when reposing on thy mother's bosom.
2. Set up to eastward of the fire enkindled, accepting prayer that wastes not, rich in heroes.  
Driving far from us poverty and famine, lift thyself up to bring us great good fortune.
3. Lord of the forest, raise thyself up on the loftiest spot of earth. Give splendour, fixt and measured well, to him who brings the sacrifice.
4. Well-robed, enveloped, he is come, the youthful: springing to life his glory waxeth greater.  
Contemplative in mind and god-adoring, sages of high intelligence upraise him.
5. Sprung up he rises in the days' fair weather, increasing in the men-frequented synod.  
With song the wise and skilful consecrate him; his voice the god-adoring singer utters.
6. Ye whom religious men have firmly planted; thou forest-sovran whom the axe hath fashioned,—  
Let those the stakes divine which here are standing be fain to grant us wealth with store of children.
- 7 O men who lift the ladles up, these hewn and planted in the ground,  
Bringing a blessing to the field shall bear our precious gift to gods.
8. Adityas, Rudras, Vasus, careful leaders, Earth, Heaven, and Prithivi and air's mid region,  
Accordant deities, shall bless our worship and make our sacrifice's ensign lofty.
9. Like swans that flee in lengthened line, the pillars have come to us arrayed in brilliant colour.  
They, lifted up on high, by sages, eastward, go forth as gods to the gods' dwelling-places.

---

\* *History of Indian Literature*, pp. 37, 38.

10. Those stakes upon the earth with rings that deck them seem to the eye like horns of hornéd creatures;  
Or as upraised by priests in invocation, let them assist us in the rush to battle.
11. Lord of the wood, rise with a hundred branches: with thousand branches may we rise to greatness,  
Thou whom this hatchet, with an edge well whetted for great felicity hath brought before us.

## Hymn 48. INDRA.

1. Soon as the young Bull (Indra) sprang into existence he longed to taste the pressed-out Soma's liquor.  
Drink thou thy fill, according to thy longing, first, of the noble mixture bleat with Soma.
2. That day when thou wast born thou, fain to taste it, drankest the plant's milk which the mountains nourish.  
That milk thy mother\* first, the dame who bare thee poured for thee in thy mighty father's† dwelling.
3. Desiring food he came unto his mother, and on her breast beheld the pungent Soma.  
Wise, he moved on, keeping aloof the others, and wrought great exploits in his varied aspects.
4. Fierce, quickly conquering, of surpassing vigour, he framed his body even as he listed.  
E'en from his birth-time Indra conquered Twashtar, bore off the Soma and in beakers drank it.
5. Call we on Maghavan, auspicious Indra, best hero in the fight where spoil is gathered;  
The strong, who listens, who gives aid in battles, who slays the Vritras, wins and gathers riches.

## Hymn 62. INDRA AND OTHERS.

[The tenth verse of this hymn is the Gayatri.]

1. Your well-known prompt activities aforetime needed no impulse from your faithful servant.  
Where, Indra, Varuna, is now that glory wherewith ye brought support to those who loved you?
2. This man, most diligent, seeking after riches, incessantly invokes you for your favour.  
Accordant, Indra. Varuna, with the Maruts, with Heaven and Earth, hear ye mine invocation.
3. O Indra, Varuna, ours be this treasure, ours be wealth, Maruts, with full store of heroes.  
May the Varutris with their shelter aid us, and Bharati‡ and Hotra with the mornings.
4. Be pleased with our oblations thou loved of all gods, Brihaspati:§  
Give wealth to him who brings thee gifts.
5. At sacrifices, with your hymns worship the pure Brihaspati—  
I pray for power which none may bend—

---

\* Aditi. † Kasyapa or Twashtar. ‡ Wives of the gods. § Lord of prayer.

6. The Bull of men, whom none deceive, the wearer of each shape  
at will,  
Brihaspati most excellent.
7. Divine, resplendent Pushan, this our newest hymn of eulogy  
By us is chanted forth to thee.
8. Accept with favour this my song, be gracious to the earnest  
thought,  
Even as a bridegroom to his bride.
9. May he who sees all living things, sees them together at a  
glance,—  
May he, may Pushan be our help.
10. May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the god :  
So may he stimulate our prayers.
11. With understanding, earnestly, of Savitar the god we crave,  
Our portion of prosperity.
12. Men, singers worship Savitar the god with hymn and holy rites,  
Urged by the impulse of their thoughts.
13. Soma who gives success goes forth, goes to the gathering-place  
of gods.  
To seat him at the seat of Law.
14. To us and to our cattle may Soma give salutary food,  
To biped and to quadruped.
15. May Soma, strengthening our power of life, and conquering our  
foes,  
In our assembly take his seat.
16. May Mitra, Varuna, sapient pair, bedew our pasturage with oil,  
With meath the regions of the air.
17. Far-ruling, joyful when adored, ye reign through majesty of  
might,  
With pure laws everlastingly.
18. Lauded by Jamadagni's song sit in the place of holy Law.\*  
Drink Soma, ye who strengthen Law.

#### MANDALA IV.

This book contains 58 hymns. The first forty-one are ascribed to the Rishi Vamadeva, son of Gotama; so also are the last fourteen. Twelve are addressed specially to Indra, and eleven to Agni.

#### Hymn 12. AGNI.

[This is one of the few hymns addressed to Agni in which sin is prominently mentioned. But the invariable reference to wealth is also introduced.]

1. Whoso enkindles thee, with lifted ladle, and thrice this day  
offers thee food, O Agni,  
May he excel, triumphant, through thy splendours, wise through  
thy mental power, O Jatavedas.†

\* The place where sacrifice ordained by eternal Law is performed.

† An epithet of Agni. Its meaning is uncertain.



2. Whoso, with toil and trouble, brings thee fuel, serving the  
majesty of mighty Agni,  
He kindling thee at evening and at morning, prospers, and come  
to wealth, and slays his foemen.
3. Agni is master of sublime dominion, Agni is lord of strength and  
lofty riches.  
Straightway the self-reliant, god, most youthful, gives treasure  
to the mortal who adores him.
4. Most youthful god, whatever sin, through folly, here in the world  
of men we have committed,  
Before great Aditi\* make thou us sinless : remit entirely, Agni  
our offences.
5. Even in the presence of great sin, O Agni, free us from prison of  
the gods or mortals.  
Never may we who are thy friends be injured : grant health and  
wealth unto our seed and offspring.
6. Even as ye here, gods excellent and holy, have loosed the cord  
that by the foot was tethered,  
So also set us free from this affliction : long let our life, O Agni  
be extended.

#### Hymn 44. ASVINS.

[Numerous hymns are addressed to the Asvins. One is quoted as specimen.]

1. May we invoke this day your car, far-spreading, O Asvins, even  
the gathering of the sunlight,—  
Car praised in hymns, most ample, rich in treasure, fitted with  
seats, the car that beareth Surya.
2. Asvins, ye gained that glory by your godhead, ye sons of heaven  
by your own might and power.  
Food followeth close upon your bright appearing when stately  
horses in your chariot draw you.
3. Who bringeth you to-day for help with offered oblations, or with  
hymns to drink the juices ?  
Who, for the sacrifice's ancient lover, turneth you hither, Asvins  
offering homage ?
4. Borne on your golden car, be omnipresent ! come to this sacrifice  
of ours, Nasatyas.  
Drink of the pleasant liquor of the Soma: give riches to the people  
who adore you.
5. Come hitherward to us from earth, from heaven, borne on your  
golden chariot rolling lightly.  
Suffer not other worshippers to stay you : here are ye bound by  
earlier bonds of friendship.
6. Now for us both mete out, O wonder-workers, riches exceeding  
great with store of heroes.  
Because the men have sent you praise, O Asvins, and Ajamilhas  
come to the laudation.

\* "Apparently\* the great omnipresent Power which controls the forces of the universe, and from which no sins are hidden."—Griffith. † Men of the Rishi's family

7. Whene'er I gratified you here together, your grace was given us,  
O ye rich in booty.  
Protect, ye twain, the singer of your praises : to you, Nasatyas,  
is my wish directed.

## MANDALA V.

This Book contains 87 hymns. Of these 21 are addressed to Agni, 11 to Mitra and Varuna, 9 each to Indra, the Maruts and Isvedevas, and 6 to the Asvins.

## Hymn 26. AGNI.

[Agni is specially addressed as the inviter of the gods to sacrifices.]

1. O Agni, holy and divine, with splendour and thy pleasant tongue  
Bring hither and adore the gods.
2. We pray thee, thou who droppest oil, bright-rayed ! who lookest  
on the Sun,  
Bring the gods hither to the feast.
3. We have enkindled thee, O sage, bright caller of the gods to feast,  
O Agni, great in sacrifice.
4. O Agni, come with all the gods, come to our sacrificial gift :  
We choose thee as invoking priest.
5. Bring, Agni, to the worshipper who pours the juice heroic strength :  
Sit with the gods upon the grass.
6. Victor of thousands, Agni, thou, enkindled, cherishest the laws,  
Laud-worthy, envoy of the gods.
7. Sit Agni Jatavedas down, the bearer of our sacred gifts,  
Most youthful, god and minister.
8. Duly proceed our sacrifice, comprising all the gods, to-day :  
Strew holy grass to be their seat.
9. So may the Maruts sit thereon, the Asvins, Mitra, Varuna :  
The gods with all their company.

## Hymn 40. INDRA, SURYA, ATRI.

[The Hindu explanation of eclipses is that they are caused by the Asura Rahu seeking to seize the sun and moon. In the Vedas he is called Svarbhānu. The sun is supposed to be delivered by this hymn, chanted by Atri, and expresses his gratitude. The verses referring to the eclipse alone are noted.]

5. O Surya, when the Asura's descendant, Svarbhānu, pierced thee through and through with darkness,  
All creatures looked like one who is bewildered, who knoweth not the place where he is standing.

6. What time thou smotest down Svarbhannu's magic that spread itself beneath the sky, O Indra,  
By his fourth sacred-prayer Atri discovered Surya concealed in gloom that stayed his function.
7. Let not the oppressor with this dread, through anger swallow me up, for I am thine, O Atri.  
Mitra art thou, the sender of true blessings: thou and king Varuna be both my helpers.
8. The Brahman Atri, as he set the press-stones, serving the gods with praise and adoration,  
Established in the heaven the eye of Surya, and caused Svarbhannu's magic arts to vanish.
9. The Atris found the Sun again, him whom Svarbhannu of the brood  
Of Asuras had pierced with gloom. This none beside had power to do.

#### Hymn 57. MARUTS.

1. Of one accord, with Indra, O ye Rudras, come borne on your golden car for our prosperity.  
An offering from us, this hymn is brought to you, as, unto one who thirsts for water, heavenly springs.
2. Armed with your daggers, full of wisdom, armed with spears armed with your quivers, armed with arrows, with good bows, Good horses and good cars have ye, O Prisni's sons: ye, Maruts with good weapons go to victory.
3. From hills and heaven ye shake wealth for the worshipper: in terror at your coming low the woods bow down.  
Ye make the earth to tremble, sons of Prisni, when for victory ye have yoked, fierce ones! your spotted deer,
4. Impetuous as the wind, wrapped in their robes of rain, like twins of noble aspect and of lovely form,  
The Maruts, spotless, with steeds tawny-hued and red, strong in their mightiness and spreading wide like heaven
5. Rich in adornment, rich in drops, munificent, bright in their aspect, yielding bounties that endure.  
Noble by birth, adorned with gold upon their breasts, the singers of the sky have won immortal fame.
6. Borne on both shoulders, O ye Maruts, are your spears: within your arms is laid your energy and strength.  
Your manliness on your heads, your weapons in your cars, all glorious majesty is moulded on your forms.
7. Vouchsafe to us, O Maruts, splendid bounty in cattle and in steeds, in cars and heroes.  
Children of Rudra, give us high distinction: may I enjoy your godlike help and favour,
8. Ho! Maruts, heroes, skilled in Law, immortal, be gracious unto us, ye rich in treasures,  
Ye hearers of the truth, ye sage and youthful, mightily waxing with loud-resonant voices.

## Hymn 83. PARJANYA.

[Max Müller says the following is a very fair specimen of Vedic hymns.]

1. Sing with these songs thy welcome to the mighty, with adoration  
praise and call Parjanya.  
The Bull, loud roaring, swift to send his bounty, lays in the  
plants the seed for germination.
2. He smites the trees apart, he slays the demons : all life fears him  
who wields the mighty weapon.  
From him exceeding strong flees e'en the guiltless when thunder-  
ing Parjanya smites the wicked.
3. Like a car-driver whipping on his horses, he makes the messengers  
of rain spring forward.  
Far off resounds the roaring of the lion what time Parjanya fills  
the sky with rain-cloud.
4. Forth burst the winds, down come the lightning- flashes ; the  
plants shoot up, the realm of light is streaming.  
Food springs abundant for all living creatures what time Parjanya  
quickens earth with moisture.
5. Thou at whose bidding earth bows low before thee, at whose com-  
mand hoofed cattle fly in terror,  
At whose behest the plants assume all colours, even thou Par-  
janya, yield us great protection.
6. Send down for us the rain of heaven, ye Maruts, and let the stal-  
lion's streams descend in torrents.  
Come hither with this thunder while thou pourest the waters  
down, our heavenly lord and father.
7. Thunder and roar : the germ of life deposit. Fly round us on  
thy chariot water-laden.  
Thine opened water-skin draw with thee downward, and let the  
hollows and the heights be level.
8. Lift up the mighty vessel, pour down water, and let the liberated  
streams rush forward.  
Saturate both the earth and heaven with fatness, and for the  
cows let there be drink abundant.
9. When thou, with thunder and with roar, Parjanya, smitest sin-  
ners down,  
This universe exults thereat, yea, all that is upon the earth
10. Thou hast poured down the rain-flood : now withhold it. Thou  
hast made desert places fit for travel.  
Thou hast made herbs to grow for our enjoyment : yea, thou hast  
won thee praise from living creatures.

## Hymn 85. VARUNA.

1. Sing forth a hymn sublime and solemn, grateful to glorious  
Varuna, imperial ruler,  
Who hath struck out, like one who slays the victim, earth as a  
skin to spread in front of Surya.

2. In the tree-tops the air he hath extended, put milk in kine and vigorous speed in horses,  
Set intellect in hearts, fire in the waters, Surya in heaven, and Soma on the mountain.
3. Varuna lets the big cask, opening downward, flow through the heaven and earth and air's mid-region.  
Therewith the universe's sovran waters earth as the shower of rain bedews the barley.
4. When Varuna is fain for milk he moistens the sky, the land, and earth to her foundation.  
Then straight the mountains clothe them in the rain-cloud : the heroes, putting forth their vigour, loose them.
5. I will declare this mighty deed of magic, of glorious Varuna the lord immortal ;  
Who standing in the firmament hath meted the earth out with the sun as with a measure.
6. None, verily, hath ever let or hindered this the most wise god's mighty deed of magic,\*  
Whereby, with all their flood, the lucid rivers fill not one sea wherein they pour their water.
7. If we have sinned against the man who loves us, have ever wronged a brother, friend, or comrade,  
The neighbour ever with us, or a stranger, O Varuna, remove from us the trespass.
8. If we, as gamblers cheat at play, have cheated, done wrong unwittingly or sinned of purpose,  
Cast all these sins away like loosened fetters, and Varuna, let us be thine own beloved.

---

### MANDALA VI.

The Rishi of this Book is Bharadvaja, to whom, with few exceptions, all the hymns are attributed. It contains 75 hymns. To Indra 21 hymns are addressed ; to Agni, 13 ; to Pushan, 5 ; to the Visvadevas, 4.

#### Hymn 28. Cows.†

1. The kine have come and brought good fortune : let them rest in the cow-pen and be happy near us.  
Here let them stay prolific, many-coloured, and yield through many morns their milk for Indra.
2. Indra aids him who offers sacrifice and gifts : he takes not what is his, and gives him more thereto.  
Increasing ever more and more his wealth, he makes the pious dwell within unbroken bounds.

---

\* *Máyám*. The word may be rendered design.

† The cows are the deified object of the hymn, except in stanza 2 and part of 8, where the deity is Indra.

3. These are ne'er lost, no robber ever injures them : no evil-minded foe attempts to harass them.  
The master of the kine lives many a year with these, the cows whereby he pours his gifts and serves the gods.
4. The charger with his dusty brow o'ertakes them not, and never to the shambles do they take their way.  
These cows, the cattle of the pious worshipper, roam over wide-spread pasture where no danger is.
5. To me the cows seem Bhaga, they seem Indra,\* they seem a portion of the first-poured Soma.  
These present cows, they, O ye men, are Indra. I long for Indra with my heart and spirit.
6. O cows, ye fatten e'en the worn and wasted, and make the unlovely beautiful to look on.  
Prosper my house, ye with auspicious voices. Your power is glorified in our assemblies.
7. Crop good pasturage and be prolific; drink pure sweet water at goodly drinking-places.  
Never be thief or sinful man your master, and may the dart of Rudra still avoid you.
8. Now let this close admixture be close intermingled with these cows,  
Mixt with the steer's prolific flow, and, Indra, with thy hero might.

## Hymn 53. PUSHAN.

[Niggardliness is condemned].

1. Lord of the path, O Pushan, we have yoked and bound thee to our hymn,  
Even as a car, to win the prize.
2. Bring us the wealth that men require, a manly master of a house,  
Free handed with the liberal meed.
3. Even him who would not give, do thou, O glorious Pushan, urge to give,  
And make the niggard's soul grow soft.
4. Clear paths that we may win the prize; scatter our enemies afar.  
Strong god, be all our thoughts fulfilled.
5. Penetrate with an awl (or goad), O sage, the hearts of avaricious churls,  
And make them subject to our will.
6. Thrust with thine awl, O Pushan : seek that which the niggard's heart holds dear,  
And make him subject to our will.
7. Tear up and rend in pieces, sage, the hearts of avaricious churls,  
And make them subject to our will.

---

\* "The worshipper regards the cows as the deities, Bhaga and Indra, who bring him happiness,"—Griffith.

8. Thou, glowing Pushan, carriest an awl that urges men to prayer;  
Therewith do thou tear up and rend to shreds the heart of every  
one.
9. Thou bearest, glowing lord ! a goad with horny point that guides  
the cows :  
Thence do we seek thy gift of bliss.
10. And make this hymn of ours produce kine, horses, and a store  
of wealth  
For our delight and use as men.

#### Hymn 75. WEAPONS OF WAR.

["The deified objects are the armour and warlike weapons, charioteer, chariot, horses, etc., and tutelary deities, addressed, mentioned or invoked in the hymn."—Griffith.]

The hymn is too long for quotation. The following are some of the verses referring to the bow and arrow, the principal offensive weapon.

2. With bow let us win kine, with bow the battle, with bow be  
victors in our hot encounters.  
The bow brings grief and sorrow to the foeman : armed with the  
bow may we subdue all regions.
16. Loosed from the bowstring fly away, thou arrow, sharpened by  
our prayer.  
Go to the foemen, strike them hoome, and let not one be left alive.  
Charioteer and chariot are thus noticed.
6. Upstanding in the car the skilful charioteer guides his strong  
horses on wither soe'er he will.  
See and admire the strength of those controlling reins which from  
behind declare the will of him who drives.
7. Horses whose hoofs rain dust are neighing loudly, yoked to the  
chariots, showing forth their vigour.  
With their forefeet descending on the foemen, they, never flinch-  
ing, trample and destroy them.

The hymn concludes thus :

19. Whoso would kill us, whether he be a strange foe or one of us,  
May all the gods discomfit him. My nearest, closest mail is  
prayer.

#### MANDALA VII.

All the hymns of this Book are ascribed to the Rishi Vasishta, with whom his sons are associated as the seers of parts of two hymns. There are 104 hymns ; of which 14 are addressed to Indra, 13 to Agni, 8 to the Asvins, 7 each to Ushas and the Visvedevas, 4 to Varuna, and one to frogs. The prevailing metre is Trishtubh.

#### Hymn 45. SAVITAR.

1. May the god Savitar, rich in goodly treasures, filling the region  
borne by steeds come hither,  
In his hand holding much that makes people happy, lulling  
slumber and arousing creatures.

2. Golden, sublime, and easy in their motion, his arms extend unto the bounds of heaven.  
Now shall that mightiness of his be lauded : even Sura \* yields to him in active vigour.
3. May this god Savitar, the strong and mighty, the lord of precious wealth, vouchsafe us treasures.  
May he, advancing his far-spreading lustre, bestow on us the food that feedeth mortals.
4. These songs praise Savitar whose tongue is pleasant, praise him whose arms are full, whose hands are lovely.  
High vital strength, and manifold, may he grant us. Preserve us evermore, ye gods, with blessings.

## Hymn 46. RUDRA.

1. To Rudra bring these songs, whose bow is firm and strong, the god of heavenly nature, with swift-flying shafts.  
Disposer, conqueror whom none may overcome, armed with sharp-pointed weapons : may he hear our call.
2. He through his lordship thinks on beings of the earth, on heavenly beings through his high imperial sway.  
Come willingly to our doors that gladly welcome thee and heal all sickness, Rudra, in our families.
3. May thy bright arrow which, shot down by thee from heaven, flieth upon the earth, pass us uninjured by.  
Thou, very gracious god, hast thousand medicines : inflict no evil on our sons or progeny.
4. Slay us not, nor abandon us, O Rudra : let not thy noose, when thou art angry, seize us.  
Give us trimmed grass and rule over the living. Preserve us evermore, ye gods, with blessings.

## Hymn 49. WATERS.

1. Forth from the middle of the flood the Waters—their chief the Sea—flow cleansing, never sleeping.  
Indra, the Bull, the thunderer, dug their channels ; here let those Waters, goddesses, protect me.
2. Waters which come from heaven, or those that wander dug from the earth, or flowing free by nature,  
Bright, purifying, speeding to the Ocean, here let those Waters, goddesses, protect me.
3. Those amid whom goes Varuna the sovran, he who discriminates men's truth and falsehood—  
Distilling meath the bright, the purifying, here let those Waters, goddesses, protect me.
4. They from whom Varuna the king, and Soma and all the deities drink strength and vigour,  
They into whom Vaisvanara Agni entered, here let these Waters, goddesses, protect me.

---

\* The Sun as distinguished from Savitar.



## Hymn 51. ADITYAS.

1. Through the Adityas' most auspicious shelter, through their most recent succour may we conquer.  
May they, the mighty, giving ear, establish this sacrifice, to make us free and sinless.
2. Let Aditi rejoice and the Adityas, Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, most righteous.  
May they, the guardians of the world, protect us, and, to show favour, drink this day our Soma.
3. All universal deities, the Maruts, all the Adityas, yea, and all the Ribhus.  
Indra and Agni, and the Asvins, lauded, preserve us evermore, ye gods, with blessings.

## Hymn 53. HEAVEN AND EARTH.

1. As priest with solemn rites and adorations I worship Heaven and Earth, the high and holy.  
To them, great parents of the gods, have sages of ancient time singing, assigned precedence.
2. With newest hymns set in the seat of Order those the two parents born before all others,  
Come, Heaven and Earth, with the celestial people, hither to us, for strong is your protection.
3. Yea, Heaven and Earth, ye hold in your profession full many a treasure for the liberal giver.  
Grant us the wealth which comes in free abundance.  
Preserve us evermore, ye gods, with blessings.

## Hymn 55. VASTOSHPATI AND INDRA.

[The hymn appears to be made up of three unconnected pieces. The first verse is addressed to Vastoshpati, the guardian god of the house. Verses 2-4 are addressed by the spirits of Indra's worshippers to one of Yama's dogs who would prevent their entering the home of the pious dead. Sarama, the hound of Indra, was the mother of the two spotted watch-dogs of Yama. Verses 5-8 form a sleep song. It was recited by thieves and house-breakers to put people to sleep.—Abridged from Griffiths.]

1. Vastoshpati, who killest all disease, and wearest every form,  
Be an auspicious friend to us.
2. When, O bright son of Sarama, thou showest, tawny-hued ! thy teeth,  
They gleam like lances' points within thy mouth when thou wouldest bite : go thou to sleep.
3. Sarama's son, retrace thy way : bark at the robber and the thief.  
At Indra's singers barkest thou ? Why dost thou seek to terrify us ? Go to sleep.
4. Be on thy guard against the boar, and let the boar beware of thee.  
At Indra's singers barkest thou ? Why dost thou seek to terrify us ? Go to sleep.

5. Sleep mother, let the father sleep, sleep dog and master of the house.  
Let all the kinamen sleep, sleep all the people who are round about.
6. The man who sits, the man who walks, and whosoever looks on us,  
Of these we closely shut the eyes, even as we closely shut this house.
7. The Bull who hath a thousand horns, who rises up from out of the sea,—  
By him the strong and mighty one we lull and make the people sleep.
8. The women sleeping in the court, lying without, or stretched on beds,  
The matrons with their odorous sweets—these, one and all, we lull to sleep.

## Hymn 77. USHAS.

1. She hath shone brightly like a youthful woman stirring to motion every living creature.  
Agni hath come to feed on mortals' fuel. She hath made light and chased away the darkness.
2. Turned to this All, far-spreading, she hath risen and shone in brightness with white robes about her.  
She hath beamed forth lovely with golden colours, mother of kine, guide of the days she bringeth.
3. Bearing the gods, own eye, auspicious lady, leading her courser white and fair to look on,  
Distinguished by her beams Dawn shines apparent, come forth to all the world with wondrous treasure.
4. Draw nigh with wealth and dawn away the foeman : prepare for us wide pasture free from danger.  
Drive away those who hate us, bring us riches : pour bounty, opulent lady, on the singer.
5. Send thy most excellent beams to shine and light us, giving us lengthened days, O Dawn, O goddess.  
Granting us food, thou who hast all things precious, and bounty rich in chariots, kine, and horses.
6. O Ushas, nobly-born, daughter of Heaven, whom the Vasishthas with their hymns make mighty,  
Bestow thou on us vast and glorious riches. Preserve us evermore, ye gods, with blessings.

## Hymn 86. VARUNA.

1. The tribes of men have wisdom through his greatness who stayed even spacious heaven and earth asunder;  
Who urged the high and mighty sky to motion, and stars of old, and spread the earth before him.

2. With mine own heart I commune on the question how Varuna and I may be united.  
What gift of mine will he accept unangered? When may I calmly look and find him gracious?
3. Fain to know this my sin I question others: I seek the wise, O Varuna, and ask them.  
This one same answer even the sages gave me, Surely this Varuna is angry with thee.
4. What, Varuna, hath been my chief transgression, that thou shouldst slay the friend who sings thy praises?  
Tell me, unconquerable lord, and quickly sinless will I approach thee with mine homage.
5. Loose us from sins committed by our fathers, from those wherein we have ourselves offended.  
O king, loose, like a thief who feeds the cattle, as from the cord a calf, set free Vasishtha.
6. Not our own will betrayed us, but seduction, thoughtlessness, Varuna! wine, dice, or anger.  
The old is near to lead astray the younger; even slumber leadeth men to evil-doing.
7. Slavelike may I do service to the bounteous, serve, free from sin the god inclined to anger.  
This gentle lord gives wisdom to the simple; the wiser god lead on the wise to riches.
8. O lord, O Varuna, may this laudation come close to thee, and lie within thy spirit.  
May it be well with us in rest and labour. Preserve us evermore ye gods, with blessings.

### Hymn 103. FROGS.

[The hymn, says Max Müller, "which is called a panegyric of the frogs, is clearly a satire on the priests." It evidently belongs to a late period of Vedic poetry.]

1. They who lay quiet for a year, the Brahmins who fulfil their vow  
The frogs have lifted up their voice, the voice Parjanya hath inspired.
2. What time on these, as on a dry skin lying in the pool's bed, the floods of heaven descended,  
The music of the frogs comes forth in concert like the cow lowing with their calves beside them.
3. When at the coming of the Rains the water has poured upon them as they yearned and thirsted,  
One seeks another as he talks and greets him with cries of pleasure as son his father.
4. Each of these twain receives the other kindly, while they are revelling in the flow of waters,  
When the frog moistened by the rain springs forward, and Green and Spotty both combine their voices.
5. When one of these repeats the other's language, as he who learns the lesson of the teacher,

- Your every limb seems to be growing larger as ye converse with eloquence on the waters.
6. One as Cow-bellow and Goat-bleat the other, one frog is Green and one of them is Spotty.  
They bear one common name, and yet they vary, and, talking, modulate the voice diversely.
  7. As Brahmans, sitting round the brimful vessel, talk at the Soma-rite of Atiratra,  
So, frogs, ye gather round the pool to honour this day of all the year, the first of Rain-time.
  8. These Brahmans with the Soma-juice, performing their year-long rite, have lifted up their voices;  
And these Adhvaryus, sweating with their kettles, come forth and show themselves, and none are hidden.
  9. They keep the twelve month's god-appointed order, and never do the men neglect the season.  
Soon as the Rain-time in the year returneth, these who were heated kettles gain their freedom.
  10. Cow-bellow and Goat-bleat have granted riches, and Green and Spotty have vouchsafed us treasure.  
The frogs who give us cows in hundreds lengthen our lives in this most fertilizing season.

### Hymn 104. INDRA-SOMA.

[The hymn consists chiefly of imprecations directed against demons and evil spirits, Rakshasas and Yatudhanas, a kind of goblins. The demon foes are supposed to go about at night, disturbing sacrifices and pious men, snaring and even devouring human beings, and generally hostile to the human race.—Griffith. The hymn is too long to be quoted in full.]

1. Indra and Soma, burn, destroy the demon foe, send downward,  
O ye Bulls, those who had gloom to gloom.  
Annihilate the fools, slay them and burn them up; chase them away from us, pierce the voracious ones.
2. Indra and Soma, let sin round the wicked boil like as a caldron set amid the flames of fire.  
Against the foe of prayer, devourer of raw flesh, the vile fiend fierce of eye, keep ye perpetual hate.
3. Indra and Soma, plunge the wicked in the depth, yea, cast them into darkness that hath no support,  
So that not one of them may ever thence return; so may your wrathful might prevail and conquer them.
4. Indra and Soma, hurl your deadly crushing bolt down on the wicked fiend from heaven and from the hearth.  
Yea, forge out of the mountains your celestial dart wherewith ye burn to death the waxing demon race.
5. Indra and Soma, cast ye downward out of heaven your deadly darts of stone burning with fiery flame,  
Eternal, scorching darts; plunge the voracious ones within the depth, and let them sink without a sound.

24. Indra destroy the demon, male and female, joying and triumphing in arts of magic.  
Let the fools' gods with bent necks fall and perish, and see no more the sun when he arises.
25. Look each one hither, look around: Indra and Soma, watch ye well.  
Cast forth your weapon at the fiends; against the sorcerers, hurl your bolt.

### MANDALA VIII.

This Book is by a variety of authors. It contains 92 hymns, with 11 called Valakhilya Hymns. Of the hymns 36 are addressed to Indra, 11 to Agni, 5 to the Visvedevas, and 3 to the Maruts.

#### Hymn 30. VISVEDEVAS.

1. Not one of you, ye gods, is small, none of you is a feeble child:  
All of you, verily, are great.
2. Thus be ye lauded, ye destroyers of the foe, ye three and thirty deities,  
The gods of man, the holy ones.
3. As such defend and succour us, with benedictions speak to us:  
Lead us not from our fathers' and from Manu's path into the distance far away.
4. Ye deities who stay with us, and all ye gods of all mankind,  
Give us your wide protection, give shelter for cattle and for steed.

#### Hymn 69. INDRA.

[This hymn is for success in a coming chariot race.]

1. O Satakratu, truly I have made none else my comforter.  
Indra, be gracious unto us.
2. Thou who hast ever aided us kindly of old to win the spoil,  
As such, O Indra, favour us.
3. What now! As prompter of the poor thou helpest him who  
sheds the juice.  
Wilt thou not, Indra, strengthen us?
4. O Indra, help our chariot on, yea, thunderer, though it be  
behind:  
Give this my car the foremost place.
5. Ho there! why sittest thou at ease? Make thou my chariot  
be first:  
And bring the fame of victory near.
6. Assist our car that seeks the prize. What can be easier for thee  
So make thou us victorious.

#### Hymn 85. INDRA.

[In this hymn, of which only a few verses are quoted, Indra is styled the "holiest of the holy" (v. 4) and maker of the world and creatures, (v. 6).]

1. For him the Mornings made their courses longer, and Nights with  
pleasant voices spake to Indra.

For him the floods stood still, the seven mothers, streams easy  
for the heroes to pass over.

2. The darter penetrated, though in trouble, thrice-seven close-  
pressed ridges of the mountains.

Neither might god nor mortal man accomplish what the strong  
hero wrought in full-grown vigor.

3. The mightiest force is Indra's bolt of iron when firmly grasped  
in both the arms of Indra.

His head and mouth have powers that pass all others, and all  
his people hasten near to listen.

4. I count thee as the holiest of the holy, the oaster-down of  
what hath ne'er been shaken.

I count thee as the banner of the heroes, I count thee as the  
chief of all men living.

5. What time, O Indra, in thine arms thou tookest thy wildly-rush-  
ing bolt to slay the Dragon,

The mountains roared, the cattle loudly bellowed, the Brahmins  
with their hymns drew nigh to Indra.

6. Let us praise him who made these worlds and creatures all,  
things that after him sprang into being.

Fain would we win by song a friend in Indra, and wait upon our  
lord with adoration.

7. Flying in terror from the snort of Vritra, all deities who were  
thy friends forsook thee.

So, Indra, be thy friendship with the Maruts : in all these battles  
thou shalt be the victor.

---

## MANDALA IX.

[This Book contains 114 Hymns. With the exception of one to the Apris  
d two in which Soma is invoked conjointly, all the hymns are addressed to  
ma. Even in the hymn to the Apris, the attributes of Agni are transferred  
Soma. He is addressed as Pavamana, representing the juice as it flows  
ough the wool which is used as a strainer, and thus undergoing purifica-  
n. The hymns were intended to be sung while this process was going on.  
e Book contains endless repetitions.]

### Hymn 1. SOMA PAVAMANA.

1. In sweetest and most gladdening stream flow pure, O Soma,  
on thy way,

Pressed out for Indra, for his drink.

2. Fiend-queller, friend of all men, he hath with the plank attained  
unto

His place, his iron-fashioned home.

3. Be thou best Vritra-slayer, best granter of bliss, most liberal :  
Promote our wealthy princes' gifts.

4. Flow onward with thy juice unto the banquet of the mighty  
gods :

Flow hither for our strength and fame.

5. O Indu, \* we draw nigh to thee, with this one object day by day  
To thee alone our prayers are said.
6. The daughter of the Sun by means of this eternal fleece make  
pure  
Thy Soma that is gushing forth,
7. Ten sister maid† of slender form seize him amid the press and  
hold  
Him firmly on the final day.
8. The virgins send him forth : they blow the skin musician-like  
and fuse.  
The triple foe-repelling meath.
9. The inviolable milch-kine round about him blend, for Indra  
drink,  
The fresh young Soma with their milk.
10. In the wild raptures of this draught, Indra slays all the  
Vritras : he,  
The hero pours his wealth on us.

#### Hymn 96. SOMA PAVAMANA.

[In this hymn Soma is described as the father of the principal gods and his hymns are characterised as "holy." Only a few verses can be quoted.]

5. Father of holy hymns, Soma flows onward, the father of the  
earth, father of heaven ;  
Father of Agni, Surya's generator, the father who begat Indra  
and Vishnu.
6. Brahman of gods, the leader of the poets, Rishi of sages, but  
of savage creatures,  
Falcon amid the vultures, axe of forests, over the cleansing  
sieve goes Soma singing.
- .....
15. Purified with our holy hymns, this Soma overtakes malignity  
like some strong charger,  
Like fresh milk-poured by Aditi, like passage in ample room  
or like a docile car-horse.

#### Hymn 113. SOMA PAVAMANA.

[In this hymn, where the joys of heaven are more fervently implored than in other parts of the Rig-Veda, Soma is addressed as the god from whom the gift of future happiness is expected.]

7. O Pavamana, place me in that deathless, undecaying world  
Wherein the light of heaven is set, and everlasting lustre  
shines. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.
8. Make me immortal in that realm where dwells the king, Vivas-  
van's son.†  
Where is the secret shrine of heaven, where are those waters  
young and fresh. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

\* "O dropping (Soma)."

† The priest's fingers.

‡ Yama, son of Vivasvan.

9. Make me immortal in that realm where they move even as they list,  
In the third sphere of inmost heaven where lucid worlds are full of light. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.
10. Make me immortal in that realm of eager wish and strong desire, The region of the golden Sun, where food and full delight are found. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.
11. Make me immortal in that land where happiness and transports, where.  
Joys and felicities combine, and longing wishes are fulfilled.  
Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

## MANDALA X.

This Book contains 191 hymns. To Indra 34 are addressed, to Agni 25, to the Visvedevas 22. There are hymns on creation and several to be used as charms for the cure of sickness, the removal of evils, against miscarriage, &c. The Book includes some of the best hymns in the Rig-Veda. Several of the hymns are ascribed to gods, as if the real authors wished by this device to conceal their true origin.

### Hymn 14. YAMA.

[Hymn 10 contains a dialogue between Yama and Yami, in which the latter asks the brother to have children by him. This has already been noticed. Hymn 14 is a funeral address, partly to Yama, the god of the dead, and partly to the soul of the departed whose body is being consumed on the funeral pile. Yama was originally the first man who died and so showed the souls of his successors the way to the home of the departed.—Griffith. Only part quoted.]

1. Honour the king with thine oblations, Yama, Vivasvan's sons who gathers men together,  
Who travelled to the lofty heights, above us, who searches out and shows the path to many.
2. Yama first found for us the road to travel: this pasture never can be taken from us.  
Men born on earth tread their own paths that lead them whither our ancient Fathers have departed.

[The following verses are addressed to the spirit of the dead man whose funeral rites are being celebrated.]

7. Go forth, go forth upon the ancient pathways whereon our sires of old have gone before us.  
There shalt thou look on both the kings enjoying their sacred food, god Varuna and Yama.
8. Meet Yama, meet the Fathers (Pitris,) meet the merit of free or ordered acts in highest heaven.  
Leave sin and evil, seek anew thy dwelling, and bright with glory wear another body.



- 9.\* Go hence, depart ye, fly in all directions : this place for him the Fathers have provided.  
Yama bestows on him a place to rest in adorned with days and beams of light and waters.
- 10: Run and outspeed the two dogs, Sarama's offspring, brindled, four-eyed, upon thy happy pathway.  
Draw nigh, then to the gacious-minded Fathers where they rejoice in company with Yama.
11. And those two dogs of Thine, Yama, the watchers, four-eyed, who look on men and guard the pathway,—  
Entrust this man, O king, to their protection, and with prosperity and health endow him.
- 12 Dark-hued, insatiate, with distended nostrils, Yama's two envoys roam among the people ;  
May they restore to us a fair existence here and to-day, that we may see the sunlight.

### Hymn 15. FATHERS.

[This hymn is claimed to be written by Sankha son of Yama. It is the only one specially addressed to the Pitris. Offerings are made to them, which they are invited to partake, and blessings are solicited: Only verses 1—7 are quoted, but they are the principal.]

1. May they ascend, the lowest, highest, midmost, the Fathers who deserve a share of Soma.  
May they who have attained the life of spirits, skilled in Law, harmless, aid us when we call them.
2. Now let us pay this homage to the Fathers, to those who passed of old, and those who followed.  
Those who have rested in the earthly region, and those who dwell among the mighty races.
3. I have attained the gracious-minded Fathers, I have gained son and progeny from Vishnu.  
They who enjoy pressed juices with oblation, seated on sacred grass, come oftenest hither.
4. Fathers who sit on sacred grass, come, help us : these offerings have we made for you ; accept them.  
So come to us with most auspicious favour, and give us health and wealth without a trouble.
5. May they, the Fathers, worthy of the Soma, invited to their favourite oblations  
Laid on the sacred grass, come nigh and listen ; may they be gracious unto us and bless us.
6. Bowing your bended knees and seated southward, accept this sacrifice of ours with favour.

---

\* This verse is addressed to the Pisachas and other evil spirits that haunt the place of cremation.—Griffith.

Punish us not for any sin, O Fathers, which we through human frailty have committed.

7. Lapped in the bosom of the purple Mornings, give riches to the man who brings oblations,  
Grant to your sons a portion of that treasure, and, present, give them energy, ye Fathers.

### Hymn 18. VARIOUS DEITIES.

[This hymn, claimed to be written by a son of Yama, is important, as anctioning widow marriage. Verse 8. The barbarous practice of widow burning was based upon a mistranslation of verse 7. The word *Agre* was altered into *Agna*. Max Müller says: "This is, perhaps, the most flagrant instance of what can be done by an unscrupulous priesthood. Here have thousands of lives been sacrificed and a practical rebellion been threatened in the authority of a passage which was mangled, mistranslated and misapplied." Mrityu, the god of death, is distinct from Yama. Only some verses are quoted.]

1. Go hence, O Death, pursue thy special pathway apart from  
that which gods are wont to travel.  
To thee I say it who hast eyes and hearest: touch not our  
offspring, injure not our heroes.

[Verse 2 is addressed to the kinsman of the deceased. *Effacing Mrityu's footstep*, means avoiding the path of death.]

2. As ye have come effacing Mrityu's footstep, to farther times  
prolonging your existence,  
May ye be rich in children and possessions, cleansed, purified,  
and meet for sacrificing.
7. Let these unwidowed dames with noble husbands adorn them-  
selves with fragrant balm and unguent.  
Decked with fair jewels, tearless, free from sorrow, first let the  
matrons pass unto their houses.

[Verse 8 is spoken by the husband's brother, etc., to the wife of the dead man, who makes her leave her husband's body.]

8. Rise, come unto the world of life, O woman: come he is lifeless  
by whose side thou liest.  
Wifehood with this thy husband was thy portion, who took thy  
hand and wooed thee as a lover.

[Verse 10 is addressed to the body. The urn containing the ashes was buried. The earth is asked not to press heavily upon it.]

10. Betake thee to the lap of earth the mother, of earth far-spread-  
ing, very kind and gracious.  
Young dame, wool-soft, unto the guerdon-giver, may she pre-  
serve thee from Destruction's bosom.
11. Heave thyself, Earth, nor press thee downward heavily: afford  
him easy access, gently tending him.  
Earth, as a mother wraps her skirt about her child, so cover him.

## Hymn 34. DICE, ETC.

[In this hymn a gambler apparently describes his own experience. The principal verses are quoted.]

1. Sprung from tall trees on windy heights, these rollers transpo-  
me as they turn upon the table.  
Dearer to me the die that never slumbers than the deep draught  
of Mujavan's own Soma.
2. She never vexed me nor was angry with me, but to my friend  
and me was ever gracious.  
For the die's sake whose single point is final mine own devote  
wife I alienated.
3. My wife holds me aloof, her mother hates me : the wretched ma-  
finds none to give him comfort.  
As of a costly horse grown old and feeble, I find not any profit  
of the gamester.
4. Others caress the wife of him whose riches the die bath  
coveted, that rapid courser :  
Of him speak father, mother, brothers, saying, We know him  
not : bind him and take him with you.
5. When I resolve to play with these no longer, my friends depart  
from me and leave me lonely,  
When the brown dice, thrown on the board, have rattled, like a  
fond girl I seek the place of meeting.
6. The gamester seeks the gambling-house, and wonders, his body  
all afire, Shall I be lucky ?  
Still do the dice extend his eager longing, staking his gains  
against his adversary.
7. Dice, verily, are armed with goads and driving-hooks, deceiving  
and tormenting, causing grievous woe.  
They give frail gifts and then destroy the man who wins,  
thickly anointed with the player's fairest good.
10. The gambler's wife is left forlorn and wretched : the mother  
mourns the son who wanders homeless.  
In constant fear, in debt, and seeking riches, he goes by night  
unto the home of others.
11. Sad is the gambler when he sees a matron, another's wife, and  
his well-ordered dwelling.  
He yokes the brown steeds\* in the early morning, and when the  
fire is cold sinks down an outcast.
13. Play not with dice : no, cultivate thy corn-land. Enjoy the gain,  
and deem that wealth sufficient,  
There are thy cattle, there thy wife, O gambler. So this good  
Savitar himself hath told me.
14. Make me your friend : show us some little mercy. Assail us  
not with your terrific fierceness,  
Appeased be your malignity and anger, and let the brown dice  
snare some other captive.

---

\* Begins throwing the brown dice.

## Hymn 39. ASVINS.

[The Bishi of this hymn and the following is Ghoshā, daughter of Kakshi-an. Being a leper, she was incapable of marriage. When she was grown up in her father's house, the Asvins gave her health, youth, and beauty, so that she obtained a husband. Only the opening verses are quoted.]

1. As 'twere the name of father, easy to invoke, we all assembled here invoke this car of yours,  
Asvins, your swiftly-rolling circumambient car which he who worships must invoke at eve and dawn.
2. Awake all present strains, and let the hymns flow forth : raise up abundant fulness : this is our desire.  
Asvins, bestow on us a glorious heritage and give our princes treasure fair as Soma is.
3. Ye are the bliss of her who groweth old at home, and helpers of the slow although he linger last.  
Man call you too, Nasatyas, healers of the blind, the thin and feeble, and the man with broken bones.
4. Ye made Chyavana, weak and worn with length of days, young again, like a car, that he had power to move.  
Ye lifted up the son of Tugra from the floods. At our libations must all these your acts be praised.
5. We will declare among the folk your ancient deeds heroic ; yea ye were physicians bringing health.  
You, you who must be lauded, will we bring for aid, so that this foe of ours, O Asvins, may believe.

## Hymn 72. GODS.

[The poet attempts to describe the origin of the gods and the universe.]

1. Let us with tuneful skill proclaim these generations of the gods,  
That one may see them when these hymns are chanted in a future age.
2. These Brahmanaspati produced with blast and smelting, like a smith.  
Existence, in an earlier age of gods, from non-existence sprang.
3. Existence in the earliest age of gods, from non-existence, sprang.  
Thereafter were regions\* born. This sprang from the Productive Power.
4. Earth sprang from the Productive Power ; the regions from the earth were born.  
Daksha was born of Aditi, and Aditi was Daksha's child.
5. For Aditi, O Daksha, she who is thy daughter, was brought forth.  
After her were the blessed gods born of immortal parentage.
6. When ye, O gods, in yonder deep close-clasping one another stood.  
Thence, as of dancers, from your feet a thickening cloud of dust arose.

---

\* Regions, the quarters of the horizon.

7. When, O ye gods, like Yatis,\* ye caused all existing things to grow,  
Then ye brought Surya forward who was lying hidden in the sea.
8. Eight are the sons of Aditi who from her body sprang to life.  
With seven she went to meet the gods : she cast Martanda † far away.
9. So with her seven sons Aditi went forth to meet the earlier age,  
She brought Martanda thitherward to spring to life and die again.

### Hymn 81. VISVAKARMAN.

[Visvakarman is represented as the Creator of all things and architect of the world.]

1. He who sate down as Hotar-priest the Rishi, our father, offering up all things existing,—  
He, seeking through his wish a great possession, came among men on earth as archetypal.
2. What was the place whereon he took his station ? What was it that supported him ? How was it ?  
Whence Visvakarman, seeing all, producing the earth, with mighty power disclosed the heavens.
3. He who hath eyes on all sides round about him, a mouth on all sides, arms and feet on all sides.  
He, the sole god, producing earth and heaven, Weldeth them with his arms as wings, together.
4. What was the tree, what wood in sooth produced it, from which they fashioned out the earth and heaven ?  
Ye thoughtful men inquire within your spirit whereon he stood when he established all things.
5. Thine highest, lowest, sacrificial natures, and these thy midmost horo, O Visvakarman ;  
Teach thou thy friends at sacrifice, O blessed, and come thyself, exalted to our worship.
6. Bring thou thyself, exalted with oblation, O Visvakarman  
Earth and Heaven to worship,  
Let other men around us live in folly : here let us have rich as liberal patron.
7. Let us invoke to-day, to aid our labour, the lord of speech, the thought-swift Visvakarman.  
May he hear kindly all our invocations who gives all bliss for all whose works are righteous.

### Hymn 87. AGNI.

[This hymn is addressed to Agni Rakshoha, the slayer of the Rakshasas. The aborigines are often compared to them. Only some verses are quoted.]

1. I balm with oil the mighty Rakshas-slayer ; to the most famous friend I come for shelter,  
Enkindled, sharpened by our rites, may Agni protect us in the day and night from evil.

\* Devotees.

† Surya, the Sun.

2. O Jatavedas with the teeth of iron, enkindled with thy flame attack the demons.  
Seize with thy tongue the foolish gods' adorers : rend, put within thy mouth the raw-flesh eaters.
3. Apply thy teeth, the upper and the lower, thou who hast both, enkindled and destroying.  
Roam also in the air, O king, around us, and with thy jaws assail the wicked spirits.
14. With fervent heat exterminate the demons; destroy the fiends with burning flame, O Agni.  
Destroy with fire the foolish gods' adorers; blaze and destroy the insatiable monsters.
15. May gods destroy this day the evil-doer : may each hot curse of his return and blast him.  
Let arrows pierce the liar in his vitals, and Visva's net enclose the Yatudhana.\*
16. The fiend who smears himself with flesh of cattle, with flesh of horses and of human bodies,  
Who steals the milch-cow's milk away, O Agni,—tear off the heads of such with fiery fury.
20. Guard us, O Agni, from above and under, protect us from behind us and before us;  
And may thy flames, most fierce and never wasting, glowing with fervent heat, consume the sinner.

## Hymn 90. PURUSHA.†

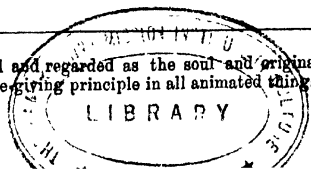
[“This pantheistic hymn, which is generally called the Purusha-sukta, of comparatively recent origin, and appears to be an attempt to harmonize the two ideas of sacrifice and creation. It contains the only passage in the Rig-Veda which enumerates the four castes.”—Griffith. In the Rig-Veda the sacrifice issuing from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet is probably only an allegory. In Manu and the Puranas it is represented as a literal statement of fact.]

1. A thousand heads had Purusha, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet.  
On every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide.‡
2. This Purusha is all that yet hath been and all that is to be;  
The lord of immortality which waxes greater still by food.
3. So mighty is his greatness; yea, greater than this is Purusha.  
All creatures are one-fourth of him, three-fourths eternal life in heaven.
4. With three-fourths Purusha went up : one-fourth of him again was here  
Thence he strode out to every side over what eats not and what eats.

\* Rakshasas.

† Purusha represents Man personified and regarded as the soul and original source of the universe, the personal and life-giving principle in all animated things. Griffith.

‡ The region of the heart of man.



5. From him Viraj\* was born ; again Purusha from Viraj was born.  
As soon as he was born he spread eastward and westward over the earth.
6. When gods prepared the sacrifice with Purusha as their offering,  
Its oil was spring, the holy gift was autumn ; summer was the wood.
7. They balm<sup>d</sup> as victim on the grass Purusha born in earliest time.  
With him the deities and all Sadhyas† and Rishis sacrificed.
8. From that great general sacrifice the dripping fat‡ was gathered up.  
He formed the creatures of the air, and animals both wild and tame.
9. From that great general sacrifice Richas and Sama-hymns were born :  
Therefrom the metres were produced, the Yajus had its birth from it.
10. From it were horses born, from it all creatures with two rows of teeth :  
From it were generated kine, from it the goats and sheep were born.
11. When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make ?  
What do they call his mouth, his arms ? What do they call his thighs and feet ?
12. The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajany made.  
His thighs became the Vaisya, from his feet the Sudra was produced.
13. The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth ;  
Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Vayu from his breath.
14. Forth from his navel came mid-air ; the sky was fashioned from his head ;  
Earth from his feet, and from his ear the regions. Thus they formed the worlds.
15. Seven fencing-logs§ had he, thrice seven layers of fuel were prepared,  
When the gods, offering sacrifice, bound, as their victim Purusha
16. Gods, sacrificing, sacrificed the victim : these were the earliest holy ordinances,  
The mighty ones attained the height of heaven, there were the Sadhyas, gods of old, are dwelling.

---

\* Viraj is said to have come, in the form of the mundane egg from Adi-Purusha the primeval Purusha. Or Viraj may be the female counterpart of Purusha. — Griffith

† A class of celestial beings, probably ancient divine sacrificers.

‡ The mixture of curds and butter.

§ Pieces of wood laid round a sacrificial fire to keep it together.

## Hymn 121. KA.

This hymn is claimed to be written by the son of Prajapati.

[Ka, meaning who? that is, the unknown god, has been applied as a name of Prajapati, and to other gods, from a forced interpretation of the interrogative pronoun which occurs in the refrain of each verse of the hymn. -Griffith.]

1. In the beginning rose Hiranyagarbha,\* born only lord of all created beings.  
He fixed and holdeth up this earth and heaven. What god shall we adore with our oblation ? †
2. Giver of vital breath, of power and vigour, he whose commandments all the gods acknowledge :  
Whose shade is death, whose lustre makes immortal. What god shall we adore with our oblation ?
3. Who by his grandeur hath become sole ruler of all the moving world that breathes and slumbers ;  
He who is lord of men and lord of cattle. What god shall we adore with our oblation ?
4. His, through his might, are these snow-covered mountains, and men call sea and Rasa ‡ his possession :  
His arms are these, his thighs these heavenly regions. What god shall we adore with our oblations ?
5. By him the heavens are strong and earth is steadfast, by him light's realm and sky-vault are supported :  
By him the regions in mid-air were measured. What god shall we adore with our oblations ?
6. To him, supported by his help, two armies enbattled look while trembling in their spirit.  
When over them the risen sun is shining. What god shall we adore with our oblation ?
7. What time the mighty waters came, containing the universal germ, producing Agni,  
Thence sprang the gods' one spirit into being. What god shall we adore with our oblation ?
8. He in his might surveyed the floods containing productive force and generating Worship.  
He is the god of gods, and none beside him. What god shall we adore with our oblation ?
9. Ne'er may he harm us who is earth's begetter, nor he whose laws are sure, the heaven's creator,  
He who brought forth the great and lucid waters. What god shall we adore with our oblation ?

---

\* The gold germ, the Sun-god, as the great power of the universe.

† Also translated "Worship we Ka the god with our oblation."

‡ The mythical river of the sky.



10. Prajapati!\* thou only comprehendest all these created things,  
and none beside thee.  
Grant us our hearts' desire when we invoke thee : may we have  
store of riches in possession.

### Hymn 129. CREATION.

This hymn is claimed to be written by Prajapati, the Supreme

[Here says Max Müller we find the conception of a beginning of all things and of a state previous even to all existence. It is a hymn full of ideas which to many would seem to necessitate the admission of a long antecedent period of philosophical thought.—*Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 559.]

1. There was not non-existent nor existent : there was no realm of  
air, no sky beyond it.  
What covered in, and where ? and what gave shelter ? Was  
water there, unfathomed depth of water ?
2. Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal : no sign was  
there, the day's and night's divider.  
That One Thing, † breathless, breathed by its own nature : apart  
from it was nothing whatsoever.
3. Darkness there was : at first concealed in darkness this All was  
indiscriminated chaos,  
All that existed then was void and formless : by the great power  
of Warmth was born that Unit.
4. Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed  
and germ of Spirit.  
Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the  
existent's kinship in the non-existent.
5. Transversely was their severing line extended : what was above  
it then, and what below it ?  
There were begetters, there were mighty forces, free action here  
and energy up yonder.
6. Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence  
was born and whence comes this creation ?  
The gods are later than this world's production. Who knows  
then whence it first came into being ?
7. He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did  
not form it,  
Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows  
it, or perhaps he knows not.

### Hymn 145. SAPATNIBADHANAM.

[The hymn is a spell to rid a jealous wife of a more favoured rival. The  
Rishi is Indrani, the consort of Indra.—Griffith.]

1. From out the earth I dig this plant an herb of most effectual  
power,

---

\* Lord of life, creatures or creation. Savitar and Soma Pavamana are also  
called, Prajapati was afterwards the name of a separate god, the bestower of progeny  
and cattle and sometimes invoked as the Creator.—Griffith. ‡

† The unit out of which the universe was developed.

Wherewith one quells the rival wife and gains the husband for oneself.

2. Auspicious, with expanded leaves, sent by the gods, victorious plant,  
Blow thou the rival wife away, and make my husband only mine.
3. Stronger am I; O stronger one, yea, mightier than the mightier;  
And she who is my rival wife is lower than the lowest dames.
4. Her very name I utter not: she takes no pleasure in this man.  
Far into distance most remote drive we the rival wife away.
5. I am the conqueror, and thou, thou also art victorious:  
As victory attends us both we will subdue my fellow-wife.
6. I have gained thee for vanquisher, have grasped thee with a stronger spell.  
As a cow hastens to her calf, so let thy spirit\* speed to me,  
hasten like water on its way.

### Hymn 162.

[This hymn is by Rakshoha, Slayer of Rakshasas, a son of Brahma. The object is the prevention of miscarriage. Stanzas 1, 2 are directed against cases, and 3—6 against evil spirits which attack women who are about to come mothers.—Griffith.]

### Hymn 163.

[This hymn is supposed to be a charm to cure consumption. The first and last stanzas are quoted:]

1. From both thy nostrils, from thine eyes, from both thine ears  
and from thy chin,  
Forth from thy head and brain and tongue I drive thy malady  
away.
6. From every member, every hair, disease that comes in every joint,  
from all thyself, from top to toe, I drive thy malady away.

### Hymn 169. Cows.

1. May the wind blow upon our Cows with healing: may they eat  
herbage full of vigorous juices.  
May they drink waters rich in life and fatness: to food that  
moves on feet be gracious, Rudra.
2. Like-coloured, various-hued, or single-coloured, whose names  
through sacrifice are known to Agni,  
Whom the Angirasas produced by fervour,—vouchsafe to these,  
Parjanya, great protection.
3. Those who have offered to the gods their bodies, whose varied  
forms are all well known to Soma,—  
Those grant us in our cattle-pen, O Indra, with their full streams  
of milk and plenteous offspring.

---

\* The husband's.

4. Prajapati, bestowing these upon me, one-minded with all gods  
and with the fathers,  
Hath to our cow-pen brought auspicious cattle : so may we own  
the offspring they will bear us.

## Hymn 175. PRESS-STONES.\*

1. May Savitar the god, O Stones, stir you according to the Law:  
Be harnessed to the shafts, and press.
2. Stones, drive calamity away, drive ye away malevolence ;  
Make ye the cows our medicine.
3. Of one accord the upper stones ; giving the Bull† his bull-like  
strength,  
Look down with pride on those below.
4. May Savitar the god, O Stones, stir you as Law commands for him  
Who sacrifices, pouring juice.

## Hymn 191. AGNI.

[This is the last hymn of the Rig-Veda. The subject is agreement in a assembly].

1. Thou, mighty Agni, gatherest all that is precious for thy friend  
Bring us all treasures as thou art enkindled in libation's place.
2. Assemble, speak together : let your minds be all of one accord,  
As ancient gods unanimous sit down to their appointed share.
3. The place is common, common the assembly, common the mind  
so be their thought united.  
A common purpose do I lay before you, and worship with you  
general oblation.
4. One and the same be your resolve, and be your minds of one  
accord.  
United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree.

## THE SAMA VEDA.

As already mentioned, this consists almost entirely of extracts from the Rig-Veda. Hymns, portions of hymns, and detached verses are transposed and re-arranged without reference to their original order, and there are frequent variations from the text of the Rig-Veda. The first hymn is considered a later addition. The second hymn, as translated by Griffith, is given to afford some idea of the composition of the book.

1. O Agni, God, the people sing reverent praise to thee for  
strength ;  
With terrors trouble thou the foe ! viii. 64, 10.

---

\* The stones used in pressing soma.

† Soma.

2. I seek with song your messenger, oblation-bearers, lord of wealth, Immortal, best at sacrifice. iv. 8, 1.
3. Still turning to their aim in thee the sacrificer's sister hymns. Have come to thee before the wind. viii. 91, 93.
4. To thee illuminer of night, O Agni, day by day, with prayers. Bringing thee reverence, we come. i. 1, 7.
5. Help, thou who knowest lauds, this work, a lovely hymn in Rudra's praise, Adorable in every house. i. 27, 10.
6. To this fair sacrifice to drink the milky draught art thou called forth ; O Agni, with the Maruts come ! i. 19, 1.
7. With homage will I reverence thee, Agni, like a long-tailed steed, Imperial lord of holy rites. i. 27, 1.
8. As Asura and as Brigu called, as Apnavāna called, I call. The radiant Agni robed with sea. viii. 91, 4.
9. When he enkindles Agni, man should with his heart attend the song : I kindle Agni till he glows. viii. 91, 22.
10. Then, verily, they see the light refulgent of primeval seed, Kindled on yonder side of heaven. viii. 6, 30.

### ATHARVA VEDA.

Next to the Rig-Veda this is the most important of the Vedas. s already mentioned, the Yajur Veda and the Sama Veda consist most entirely of selections from the Rig-Veda. The proportion much less in the Atharva Veda. One-sixth of the work is in prose. The number of the hymns is about 700, and of the verses about 6,000, of which about a sixth are found in the Rig-Veda.

Full details and illustrative extracts are given in a separate publication.

### THE BRAHMANAS.

The most important subjects in the Brahmanas, arranged with illustrative extracts in an interesting manner, will be found in the work of the Rev. Dr. Macdonald noticed at page 11. A few additional extracts may be given from two of the principal Brahmanas.

The estimate of the Brahmanas expressed by Professor Eggeling, the translator of the Satapatha Brahmana, may first be quoted :

"The translator of the Satapatha Brahmana can be under no illusion to the reception his production is likely to meet with at the hand of the general reader. In the whole range of literature few works are probably so calculated to excite the interest of any outside the very limited number of specialists than the ancient theological writings of the Hindus,

known by the name of *Brahmanas*. For wearisome prolixity of exposition, characterised by dogmatic assertion and a flimsy symbolism rather than by serious reasoning, their works are perhaps not equalled anywhere."

The *AITAREYA BRAHMANA* of the *Rig-Veda* contains "the earliest speculations of the Brahmanas on the meaning of the sacrificial prayers, and on the origin, performance, and sense of the Rites of the Vedic Religion." The Sanskrit text, with an English translation, was published by the late Dr. Haug, Superintendent of Sanskrit Studies in the Poona College.

The work, as translated by Dr. Haug, begins as follows:

"Agni, among the gods, has the lowest, Vishnu the highest place between them stand all the other deities.

They offer the Agni-Vishnu rice-cake (*purudasa*) which belongs to the *Dikshaniya Ishti* (and put its several parts) on eleven potsherds (*kapala*). They offer it (the rice-cake) really to all the deities of this (*lahti*) without foregoing any one. For Agni is all the deities, and Vishnu is all the deities. For these two (divine) bodies, Agni and Vishnu are the two ends of the sacrifice. Thus when they portion out the Agni-Vishnu rice-cake, they indeed make at the end (after the ceremony) over) prosper (all) the gods of this (ceremony).

Here they say: if there be 11 potsherds on which portions of the rice-cake are put, and (only) two deities, Agni and Vishnu, what arrangement is there for the two, or what division?

(The answer is) The rice-cake portions on 8 potsherds belong to Agni for the *Gayatri* verse consists of 8 syllables, and the *Gayatri* is Agni metre. The rice-cake portions on the 3 potsherds belong to Vishnu; for Vishnu (the sun) strode thrice through the universe. This the arrangement (to be made) for them; this is the division.

He who might think himself to have no position (not to be highly respected by others) should portion out (for being offered) *Charu* (boiled rice) over which ghee is poured. For on this earth no one has a firm footing who does not enjoy a certain (high) position. The ghee (poured over this *Charu*) is the milk of the woman; the husked rice grains (of which *Charu* consists) belong to the male; both are a pair. Thus the *Charu* on account of its consisting of a pair (of female and male parts) blesses him with the production of progeny and cattle, for his propagation (in his descendants and their property.) He who has such knowledge propagates his progeny and cattle.

He who brings the New and Full Moon oblations, has already made a beginning with the sacrifice, and made also a beginning with (the sacrificial worship of the) deities. After having brought the New or Full Moon oblations, he may be inaugurated in consequence of the offering made at these (oblations) and the sacrificial grass (having been spread) at these (oblations, at the time of making them). This (might be regarded as one *Diksha* (initiatory rite).

The *Hotar* must recite 17 verses for the wooden sticks to be thrown into the fire (to feed it). For *Prajapati* (the Lord of all creatures) is seventeen-fold, the months are twelve, and the seasons five by putting *Hemanta* (winter) and *Sirira* (between winter and spring) as one, 8

uch is the year. The year is Prajapati. He who has such a knowledge aspers by these verses (just mentioned) which reside in Prajapati."

Vol. II. pp. 1—6.

According to the foregoing, the offering of boiled rice on which ice has been poured, secures to the worshipper children and title.

The SATAPATHA BRAHMANA is called the Brahmana "of a hundred ths," because it consists of a hundred lectures (Adhyayas.)

The first Kanda treats of New and Full Moon Sacrifices.

The first 11 verses show how purification is to be obtained the y before the sacrifice begins. The remainder of the first Brahmana is as follows :

"12. By way of his first act on the following morning he (Adhvaryu jest) betakes himself to the water, and brings water forward : for water (one of the means of) sacrifice. Hence by this his first act he approaches (engages in) the sacrifice; and by bringing (water) forward, spreads out (prepares) the sacrifice.

13. He brings it forward with those mysterious words : ' Who (or Prajapati) joins (or yokes) thee (to this fire) ? He joins thee. For what or, for Prajapati) does he join thee ? For that (or him) he joins thee !' or Prajapati is mysterious ; Prajapati is the sacrifice : hence he thereby kes (gets ready for the performance) Prajapati, his sacrifice.

14. The reason why he brings forward water is, that all this universe) is pervaded by water; hence by this his first act he pervades r gains) all this (universe).

15. And whatever herein this (sacrifice) the Hotri or the Adhvaryu, the Brahman or the Agnidhra or the sacrificer himself, does not succeed in accomplishing, all that is thereby obtained (or made good).

16. Another reason why he brings forward water is this: whilst the ds were engaged in performing sacrifice, the Asuras and Rakshas forde (*ruksh*) them saying, ' He shall not sacrifice !' and because they rbade (*ruksh*), they are called Rakshas.

17. The gods then perceived this thunderbolt, to wit, the water : o water is a thunderbolt, for the water is indeed a thunderbolt; hence erever it goes, it produces a hollow, (or depression of ground); and atever it comes near, it burns up. Therefore they took up that underbolt, and in its safe and foeless shelter they spread (performed) e sacrifice. And thus he (the Adhvaryu priest) likewise takes up this underbolt, and in its safe and foeless shelter spreads the sacrifice. is is the reason why he brings forward water.

18. After pouring out some of it (into the jug) he puts it down rth of the Garhapatya fire. For water (*ap*) is female and fire (*agni*) male; and the Garhapatya is a house : hence a copulative production spring is thereby effected in this house. Now he who brings forward e water takes up a thunderbolt; but when he takes up the thunderbolt, cannot do so unless he is firmly placed; for otherwise it destroys him.

19. The reason then why he places it near the Garhapatya fire is, at the Garhapatya is a house, and a house is a safe resting-place; so t he thereby stands firmly in a house, and therefore in a safe resting-

place; in this way that thunderbolt does not destroy him,—for the reason he places it near the Garhapatya fire.

20. He then carries it north of the Ahavaniya fire. For water female and fire is male: hence a copulative production of offspring thereby effected. And in this way alone a regular copulation can take place, since the woman lies on the left (or north) side of the man.

21. Let nobody pass between the water (and the fire), lest by passing between them he should disturb the copulation which is taking place. Let him set the water down without carrying it beyond (the north side of the fire, *i. e.*, not on the eastern side); nor should he put it down before reaching (the north side, *i. e.*, not on the western side). For, if were to put the water down after carrying it beyond,—there being, as were, a great rivalry between fire and water,—he would cause the rivalry to break forth on the part of the fire; and when they (the priest and the sacrificer (touch the water of this) (vessel) he would, by carrying it and setting it down beyond (the northern side), cause the enemy to spirt in the fire. If, on the other hand, he were to put it down before gaining (the northern side), he would not gain by it the fulfilment of the work for which it had been brought forward. Let him therefore put it down exactly north of the Ahavaniya fire.

22. He now strews sacrificial grass all round (the fires), and fetch the utensils, taking two at the time, *viz.*, the winnowing basket and the Agnihotra ladle, the wooden sword and the potsherds, the wedge and the black antelope skin, the mortar and the pestle, the large and the small millstones. These are ten in number; for of ten syllables consists the Viraj (metre) and radiant (*Viraj*) also is the sacrifice: so that he thereby makes the sacrifice resemble the Viraj. The reason why he takes two at a time is, because a pair means strength; for when two undertake anything, there is strength in it. Moreover, a pair represents a productive copulation, so that a productive copulation (of these respective objects) is thereby effected.”\*

The directions for the New and Full Moon Sacrifices occupy 273 pages. Even the specimen given shows that they abound with wearisome repetitions; while the logic is absurd, as in 14, 18, &c. The Second Kanda treats of the establishment of Sacred Fires, the Worship of Fires, &c. The directions about the Agnihotra, or Morning and Evening Milk Offerings, are quoted below:

#### Fourth Kanda.

II. *The Agnihotra or Morning and Evening Libations: and the Agni Upasthana or Homage to the Fires.*

1. Prajapati alone, indeed, existed here in the beginning. He considered, ‘How may I be reproduced?’ He toiled and performed acts of penance. He generated Agni from his mouth; and because he generated him from his mouth, therefore Agni is a consumer of food and, verily, he who thus knows Agni to be a consumer of food, becomes himself a consumer of food.

2. He thus generated him first (Agre) of the gods; and therefore he is called) Agni, for Agni (they say) is the same as Agre. He, being generated, went forth as the first (purva); for of him who goes first, they say that he goes at the head (Agre). Such, then, is the origin and nature of that Agni.

3. Prajâpati then considered, 'In that Agni I have generated a food-eater for myself; but, indeed, there is no other food here but myself, whom, surely, he would not eat.' At that time this earth had, indeed, been rendered quite bald; there were neither plants nor trees. His, then, weighed on his mind.

4. Thereupon Agni turned towards him with open mouth; and he (Prajâpati) being terrified, his own greatness departed from him. Now his own greatness is his speech: that speech of his departed from him. He desired an offering in his own self; and rubbed (his hands); and because he rubbed (his hands), therefore both this and this (palm) are airless. He then obtained either a butter-offering or a milk-offering;—but, indeed, they are both milk.

5. This (offering), however, did not satisfy him, because it had hairs mixed with it. He poured it away (into the fire), saying, 'Drink while burning (osham dhaya)!' From it plants sprang: hence their name plants (oshadhayah). He rubbed (his hands) a second time, and thereby obtained another offering, either a butter-offering or a milk-offering;—but, indeed, they are both milk.

6. This (offering) then satisfied him. He hesitated: 'Shall I offer it or? Shall I not offer it up?' he thought. His own greatness said to him, 'Offer it up!' Prajâpati was aware that it was his own (Sva) greatness that had spoken (âha) to him; and offered it up with 'Svâhâ!' This is why offerings are made with 'Svâhâ!' Thereupon that burning one (viz., the sun) rose; and then that blowing one (viz., the wind) sprang up; whereupon, indeed, Agni turned away.

7. And Prajâpati, having performed offering, reproduced himself, and freed himself from Agni, Death, as he was about to devour him. And, verily, whosoever, knowing this offers the Agnihotra, reproduces himself; offspring even as Prajâpati reproduced himself; and saves himself from Agni, Death, when he is about to devour him.

8. And when he dies and when they place him on the fire, then he is born (again) out of the fire, and the fire only consumes his body. Even so he is born from his father and mother, so is he born from the fire. At that he who offers not the Agnihotra, verily, he does not come into life at all; therefore the Agnihotra should by all means be offered.

9. And as to that same birth from out of doubt;—when Prajâpati doubted he, while doubting, remained steadfast on the better (side), inasmuch that he reproduced himself and saved himself from Agni, Death, when he was about to devour him: so he also who knows that birth from out of doubt, when he doubts about anything, still remains on the better (side).

10. Having offered, he rubbed his (hands). Thence a Vikankata tree sprang forth; and therefore that tree is suitable for the sacrifice, and proper for sacrificial vessels. Thereupon those (three) heroes among the gods were born; viz., Agni, that blower (Vâyu,) and Sûrya; and,



verily, whosoever thus knows those heroes among the gods, to him a hero is born.

11. They then said, 'We come after our father Prajâpati: let us then create what shall come after us!' Having enclosed (a piece of ground), they sang praises with the Gâyatri stanza without the 'Hin' and that (with) which they enclosed was the ocean; and this earth was the praise ground (Astâva).

12. When they had sung praises, they went out towards the east, saying: 'We (will) go back thither!' The gods came upon a cow which had sprung into existence. Looking up at them, she uttered the sound 'Hin.' The gods perceived that this was the 'Hin' of the Sâman (melodious sacrificial chant); for heretofore (their song was without the 'Hin,' but after it was the (real) Sâman. And as this same sound 'Hin' of the Sâman was in the cow, therefore the latter affords the means of subsistence; and so does he afford the means of subsistence whosoever thus knows that 'Hin' of the Sâman in the cow.

13. They said 'Auspicious, indeed, is what we have produced here who have produced the cow: for truly, she is the sacrifice, and without her no sacrifice is performed; she is also the food, for the cow, indeed, is all food.'

14. This (word 'go'), then, is a name of those (cows), and so it is of the sacrifice: let him, therefore, repeat it, (as it were saying, 'Good excellent!' and verily, whosoever, knowing this, repeats it,) as it were saying, 'Good, excellent!' and verily, whosoever, knowing this, repeats it (as it were) saying, 'Good, excellent!' with him those (cows) multiply and the sacrifice will incline to him.

15. Now, Agni coveted her, 'May I pair with her,' he thought. He united with her, and his seed became that milk of hers: hence, while the cow is raw, that milk in her is cooked (warm): for it is Agni's seed, and therefore also, whether it be in a black or in a red (cow) it is ever white and shining like fire, it being Agni's seed. Hence it is warm when first milked, for it is Agni's seed.

16. They (the men) said, "Come, let us offer this up!" 'To whom of us shall they first offer this?' (said those gods).—"To me!" said Agni; "To me!" said that blower (Vâyu),—"To me!" said Surya. They did not come to an agreement; and not being agreed, they said, 'Let us go to our father Prajâpati; and to whichever of us he says it shall be offered first, to him they shall first offer this.' They went to their father Prajâpati and said, 'To whom of us shall they offer this first?'

17. He replied, 'To Agni: Agni will forthwith cause his own seed to be reproduced, and so you will be reproduced.' 'Then to thee,' he said to Sûrya; and what of the offered (milk) he then is still possessed of, that shall belong to that blower (Vâyu)!' And accordingly, they in the same way offer this (milk) to them till this day: in the Evening to Agni, and in the Morning to Sûrya; and what of the offered (milk) he then is still possessed of, that, indeed, belongs to that blower.

18. By offering, those gods were produced in the way in which they were produced, by it they gained that victory which they did gain. Agni conquered this world, Vâyu the air, and Sûrya the sky, and whosoever knowing this, offers the Agnihotra, he, indeed, is produced in the

same way, in which they were then produced, he gains that same victory which they then gained;—indeed, he shares the same world with them, whosoever, knowing this, offers the Agnihotra. Therefore the Agnihotra should certainly be performed.

Every intelligent reader of the foregoing must admit that the severe criticism of Professors Max Müller and Eggeling is deserved.

The foregoing extracts more resemble the "twaddle of idiots" than the utterances of sensible man.

---

### REVIEW.

Some general remarks may now be made based on the preceding pages.

#### THE RELIGION OF THE VEDAS POLYTHEISTIC.

**Classification of the Gods.**—"It is difficult," says Max Müller, to treat of the so-called gods celebrated in the Veda according to any system, for the simple reason that the concepts of these gods and the hymns addressed to them sprang up spontaneously and without any pre-established plan . . . Many functions are shared in common by various gods, no attempt having yet been made at organising the whole body of the gods, sharply separating one for the other, and subordinating all of them to several, or, in the end, to one supreme god."\*

Yaska, in his Nirukta, the oldest commentary on the Vedas now in existence, says: "There are three deities, viz., Agni, whose place is on earth; Vayu, or Indra, whose place is in the air; and Surya, the sun, whose place is in the sky." "These gods might be one as a priest receives various names at various sacrifices." Dr.," says he, "it may be, these gods are all distinct beings, for the praises addressed to them are distinct, and their appellations so." The former "was certainly not the idea of most of the Vedic Rishis themselves, still less of the people who listened to their songs at fairs and festivals."

Yaska, in the latter part of his work, divides the deities into three orders of terrestrial, and celestial.

**Number.**—The gods are generally spoken of as being "thrice-born" in number. "Ye gods, who are eleven in the sky, who are seven on earth, and who in your glory are eleven dwellers in the atmospheric waters, do ye welcome this our offering." "Agni, bring hither according to thy wont, and gladden the three and thirty gods with their wives."

---

\* *India What can it Teach us ?* pp. 148, 149.

The 33 gods did not include them all. Hymn viii. 35, 3. make the following additions :

With all the deities, three times eleven, here in close alliance with  
the Maruts, Bhṛigus, Floods ;

Accordant, of one mind with Surya and with dawn.

O Asvins, drink the Soma-juice.

In Book iv. 9, 9 the gods are mentioned as being much more numerous : " Three hundred, three thousand, thirty and nine gods have worshipped Agni."

*Monotheism* is a belief in the existence of one God only ; *polytheism* is a belief in a plurality of gods. Max Müller says, " If we must employ technical terms, the religion of the Veda is polytheism, not monotheism." The 27th hymn of the first Mandala of the Rig-Veda concludes as follows :

" Glory to gods' the mighty and the lesser, glory to gods the younger and the elder ;

Let us, if we have power, pay the gods worship ; no better prayer than that, ye gods, acknowledge."

As already mentioned, the gods are repeatedly said to " thrice-eleven in number." Whitney says : " The great mass of Vedic hymns are absorbed in the praise and worship of the multifarious deities of the proper Vedic pantheon, and ignore all conception of a unity of which these are to be accounted the varying manifestations."

There are different kinds of polytheism. The ancient Greeks and Romans had a more or less organised system of gods, differing in power and rank, and all subordinate to a supreme God, a Zeus or Jupiter. In the Veda, the gods worshipped as supreme by each sect stand still side by side, no one is always first, no one is always last. Even gods of a decidedly inferior and limited character assume occasionally in the eyes of a devoted poet a supreme place above all other gods.

" It would be easy to find," says Max Müller, " in the numerous hymns of the Veda, passages in which almost every single god is represented as supreme and absolute. In the first hymn of the second Mandala, Agni is called the ruler of the universe, the lord of men, the wise king, the father, the brother, the son, the friend of men ; nay, all the powers and names of the others are distinctly ascribed to Agni. . . . Indra is celebrated as the strongest god in the hymns as well as in the Brahmanas, and the burden of many of the songs of the tenth book is ; Vis'vasmād Indra uttara " Indra is greater than all." Of Soma it is said that he was both great, and that he conquers every one. He is called the king of the world ; he has the power to prolong the life of men, and in this sense he is called the maker of heaven and earth, of Agni, of Surya, of Indra and Vishnu.

"If we read the next hymn, which is addressed to Varuna, we receive that the god here invoked is, to the mind of the poet, preme and all-mighty."\*

Max Müller has coined a word, *henotheism*, † to express what he means to regard as a "peculiar character of the ancient Vedic religion." It denotes that each of several divinities is regarded as preme, and worshipped without reference to the rest. The same applies largely to modern Hinduism. Each person may have his special god, *ishta devata*, but whom he may change for another if required. At the same time he may believe in many others. Henotheism is simply a form of polytheism.

Only one being can be supreme, but a Hindu does not find any difficulty in accepting the most contradictory statements. As it may be said that all the boys in a class are first.

The hymns of the Rig-Veda were composed by many authors, extending over a period of several centuries. Hence the theology is often inconsistent. The polytheism of some hymns is very marked and distinct. In others it is hazy. Some hymns, in the absence of all others, might be regarded as monotheistic.

Some suppose that the Indo-Aryan worship in *pre-Vedic* times was monotheistic. Max Müller says:

"There is a monotheism which precedes the polytheism of the Veda. Even in the invocation of their innumerable gods, the remembrance of a God, one and infinite, breaks through the midst of an idolatrous cosmology, like the blue sky that is hidden by passing clouds."

The great Heaven-Father, Dyaus Pitar, may at a remote period have been the only object of worship. In Vedic times, however, polytheism prevailed.

Deities sprung from the same source had a tendency, after a very short career of their own, to run together. Dyaus was the ever-present light. Varuna was the sky as the all-bracing. Mitra was the sky as lighted up by the morning. Arya was the sun as shining in the sky. Savitri was the sun as giving light and life. Vishnu was the sun as striding with three steps across the sky; Indra appeared in the sky as the giver of rain, Rudra and the Maruts passed along the sky in thunderstorms; Uta and Vayu were the winds of the air; Agni was fire and light.

Hence it happened constantly that what was told of one deity could be told of another likewise; the same epithets are shared by many, the same stories are told of different gods.

Some of the old poets go so far as to declare that one god is identical with others. In the Atharva Veda (XIII. 3, 13) we read: In the evening Agni becomes Varuna; he becomes Mitra when rising in the morning; having become Savitri he passes through

\* *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 533, 534.

† *Henos*, one *theos*, god.

the sky; having become Indra he warms the heaven in the middle; Surya, the sun, is identified with Indra and Agni; Savitri with Mitra and Pushan; Indra with Varuna: Dyaus, the sky, with Parjanya, the rain-god. One poet says (Rig-Veda I. 164, 46) "That which is one, sages name it in various ways—they call Agni, Yama, Matarisvan." Another poet says: "The wise poet represent by their words Him who is one with beautiful wings in many ways."

"The formation of dual deities," says Max Müller, "seen quite peculiar to the Veda. The names of two gods who share certain functions in common were formed into a compound with dual termination, and this compound became the name of a deity. Thus we have hymns not only to Mitra and Varuna, but to Mitrarvarunau as one; may sometimes they are called the two Mitras and the two Varunas."\*

Sometimes all the gods were comprehended by one common name, *Visve Devas*, the All-gods, and prayers were addressed to them in their collective capacity.

Dr. John Muir, who has given special attention to the subject says that the hymns, "are the productions of simple men, who under the influence of the most impressive phenomena of nature saw everywhere the presence and agency of divine powers, who imagined that each of the great provinces of the universe was directed and animated by its own separate deity, and who had not yet risen to a clear idea of one supreme creator and governor of all things. This is shown not only by the special functions assigned to particular gods, but in many cases by the very names which they bear, corresponding to those of some of the elements or of the celestial luminaries."†

**Pantheism Developed.**—The tendency towards unity shown by some of the Vedic poets, did not end in *monotheism*, but in *pantheism*, that the universe, as a whole, is God. Both the hymns and the Brahmanas teach a polytheistic religion. They form the *Karmakanda*, 'the department of works.' The Upanishads, philosophical treatises at the end of some of the Brahmanas, form the *Jnanakanda*, 'the department of knowledge.' According to the Upanishads there is only one real Being in the universe, which Being also constitutes the universe. This pantheistic doctrine is everywhere traceable in some of the more ancient Upanishads, although often wrapped up in mysticism and allegory. It is clearly expressed in the well-known formula of three words from the Chhandogya Upanishad, *ekam evadvitiyam*, 'one only without a second.'

Rammohun Roy, as already mentioned, despised the hymns and the Vedas; he spoke of the Upanishads as the Vedas, and thought that they taught monotheism. The Chhandogya formula was a

\* Hibbert Lectures, p. 291.

† Studies, p. 142.

opted by Keshab Chunder Sen. But it does not mean that there is no second God, but that there is no second any thing—a totally different doctrine.

**Later Development of Polytheism.**—While the Vedic poets were generally satisfied with “ thrice-eleven ” or thirty-three deities, in the Puranas they were converted into 33 crores, ~~—~~a number greater than every man, woman and child in the country. But along with these pantheistic views are also held.

**The Religion of the Vedas Polytheistic.**—The Rev. Nehemiahemiah thus states the case :

“ The most ignorant idolaters will tell you, if you will ask them, that there is only one God, that is, the Supreme Being, and they will never say that there is more than one God. But if any one would say that the Hindus of the present time worship many gods also though they may acknowledge that there is only one God, and that they worship idols, and therefore they cannot be monotheists; then I would ask, Was not the same the case with the authors of those ancient hymns of the Rig-Veda? They may have spoken sometimes here and there of God, but the chief objects of their devotion were Agni, Váyu, Indra, and many other real or imaginary beings. And does the worship of a god in an idol appear to any one worse than the worship of fire and wind? Why? Because idols seem to be very mean things, but fire and wind are grander and finer elements? Then such a one ought not to find much fault with any that worships gods in images made of gold and silver.

“ We, then, all believed that there was only one God and called him Omnipotent, Omniscient and so on, and learned writers of our latest modern philosophical and religious books propound elaborate arguments to prove the existence of such a God, and yet we, and they worshipped, at the same time, a multitude of gods also. It then really incomprehensible to me why any one should say that there is monotheism in the Rig Veda, because in some rare passages it God seems to be spoken of, and why he should not think that there is monotheism in all, even the most modern, books of Judaism, and why he should not call every Hindu a monotheist.”\*

#### CHARACTER OF THE VEDIC GODS.

More than 2,000 years ago, Aristotle, a famous Greek philosopher, said, “ men create the gods after their own image, not only with regard to their form, but also with regard to their manner of life.” The gods of the Hindus are typical of themselves at different periods in their history. In Vedic times Indra is the soma-drinking martial god who recovers the celestial cows from the fort of

---

\* *The Supposed and Real Doctrines of Hinduism*, pp. 14, 15.

Pani, and helps the Aryans in their wars against the aborigines. In the Puranas, "Indra is a gorgeous king of a luxurious and somewhat voluptuous court, where dance and music occupy most of his time. Indra is said to have attained his prond position by his austere penances, and is in constant fear lest any mortals on earth attain the same rank by the same means."\*

The Vedic gods were like the early Aryans, especially Indra, the highest of them. Like themselves, he is represented as intensely fond of the soma juice, and as delighting in war. He was a polygamist, for Hymn x. 145 is the exultation of Indrani over her rival wives. In Hymn viii. 85, 4, Indra is, nevertheless, styled the "holiest of the holy." The Rev. Nehemiah Goreh says:

"The Shadvinsha Brahmana of the Sāma Veda prescribes a ceremony in which the god Indra is to be invoked in these words, 'O adulterous lover of Ahalya!† Now, that the Veda should prescribe the worship of a god who is believed to be an adulterer itself indicates a terrible corruption of the moral sense, but what is still more terrible is the fact that this god is to be invoked by those words as by an endearing appellation, and so this act of his adultery is supposed to be a matter of glory to him! Men whose moral sense was corrupted in such a manner could not have had proper notions of holiness.‡"

Max Müller says, "Some of the poets of the Veda ascribed to the gods sentiments and passions unworthy of the deity, such as anger, revenge, delight in material sacrifices." As already mentioned, Varuna is the only Vedic deity who is described as possessing high moral attributes. Even he gradually disappears, and his character is changed. There is not a hymn addressed to him in the Tenth Book. The Mahabharat describes him as having carried off Bhadra, the wife of Utathya.

Still, though the moral standard of the Vedic gods, with the exception mentioned, is low, they are on the whole far superior to the later creations of Hindu mythology.

#### THE RELATION OF THE WORSHIPPERS TO THE GODS.

Varuna, from his majesty and purity, was regarded with awe by the early Aryans; but he was dethroned by Indra, who was looked upon both as a mighty god and as one who would join with them in drinking the soma juice.

The Rev. K. S. Macdonald has the following remarks on the light in which the gods were generally regarded: "In one word the relation was very familiar. There is little or no sense of love or fear, no sense of the holy or the pure or the spiritual. They were

\* Dutt's *Ancient India*, Vol. III. p. 278.

† अहल्यायै नार ।

‡ *The Supposed and Real Doctrines of Hinduism*, p. 29.

the gods as of themselves, only more powerful, subject to the same weaknesses, the same desires, the same appetites. The Soma the clarified butter, the horses, etc., in which the worshippers delighted are supposed to be sources of still greater pleasure to their gods. The strength, the stimulus which they themselves experienced, or imagined they experienced, from their drinking of the Soma juice, they supposed their gods to receive in still greater measure. . . . The worshipper offers even to Varuna sweet things which the god is sure to like, and then appeals to him :\* "Once more together let us break, because my meath is brought; priest-like, thou eatest that is dear to thee." I. 25, 17. In another hymn Vasishtha addresses Indra: "Vasishtha hath poured forth his prayers, desiring to milk thee like a cow in goodly pasture." VII. 18. 4.

Agni is thus reasoned with in one of the hymns:

25. "Son of strength, Agni, if thou wert the mortal, bright as Mitra! worshipped with our gifts!  
And I were the immortal god,
26. "I would not give thee up, Vasu, to calumny or sinfulness,  
O bounteous one.  
My worshipper should feel no hunger or distress, nor, Agni,  
should he live in sin." VIII. 19.

Barth says, "The idea that it is from the offering the gods derive their strength recurs at every step in the Hymns."<sup>†</sup>

"O Ushas, nobly-born, daughter of heaven, whom the Vasishthas with their hymns make mighty. vii. 77, 6.

"May these our viands, bounteous ones! that flow in streams like holy oil,

With Kanvas hymns, increase your might. viii. 7, 19."

"As rivers swell the ocean, so, hero, our prayers increase thy might." viii. 88, 8.

**Worship a Bargain.**—There is little love or gratitude expressed in the hymns. The gods and the worshippers are like traders in a gain. "I give thee this for that." Indra is thus addressed. "Be thou no trafficker with us, (i. 33-3) do not give sparingly, demand too much."

"Whoso with toil and terrible brings the fuel, serving the majesty of mighty Agni,

"He kindling thee at evening and at morning, prospers, and comes to wealth, and slays his foeman." iv. 12, 2.

"The pourer of libations gains the home of wealth, pouring his gift conciliates hostilities, yea, the hostilities of the gods.

"Pouring he strives, unchecked and strong, to win him riches thousand fold.

Indra gives lasting wealth to him who pours forth gifts, yea, wealth he gives that long shall last." I. 133. 7.

\* *The Vedic Religion*, pp. 186, 188.

† *The Religions of India*, p. 86.



This is very clearly shown in the *Brahmanas*. Barth quotes the following from the *Taittiriya Sanhita* :

"Does he wish to do harm (to an enemy) ? Let him say (to Surya) Strike such an one, afterwards will I pay thee the offering. And (Surya) desiring to obtain the offering, strikes him." vi. 4, 5, 6.

"When filled, O divider ! fly yonder ; when well filled, fly back to us ! As at a stipulated price, let us exchange force and vigour, O Indra, give me and I shall give thee ; bring me, I shall bring thee." 1. 8, 4, 1.

The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald says : " Cannon Rawlinson points out the relation as almost the very opposite to what one would expect—the worshipper being the lord and master, the worshipped being the servant, if not the slave : 'The offerings of praise and sacrifice, and especially the offering of the Soma juice, were considered not merely to please the god who was the object of them but to lay him under a binding obligation, and almost to compel him to grant the request of the worshippers.' 'Who buys this—my Indra,' says Vamadeva, a Vedic poet, 'with ten milch kine. When he shall have slain his foes, then let the purchaser give him back to me again ;' which the commentator explains, as follows, 'Vamadeva, having by much praise got Indra into his possession of subjugation, proposes to make a bargain when about to dispose of him ;' and so he offers for ten milch kine to hand him over temporarily, apparently to any person who will pay the price, with the proviso that when Indra has subdued the person's foes, he is to be returned to the vendor !"\*

In later times this idea was still more strongly developed. The performance of austerities for a continued period was supposed to constrain the gods to grant the desired boon, although fraught with peril and even destruction to themselves.

## THE PRAYERS OF THE VEDAS.

Prayer is an essential part of religion. Belief in God leads man to ask Him for such blessings as he thinks himself to need.

Prayer is an index both to a man's own character and to supposed nature of the deity he worships. Most people are worldly and their prayers are only for temporal blessings, for wealth, sons, recovery from sickness, deliverance from earthly enemies, &c. Only a few are spiritually minded, and seek for pardon of sin, holiness, and communion with God.

The Vedic Aryans had a firm belief in the virtue of prayer. The Vedas are largely a collection of prayers.

The hymns usually begin by praising the gods for their supposed excellencies, their great deeds, sometimes even their personal beauty. The following are some examples :

\* *The Vedic Religion*, p. 137.

Indra is then addressed :

"To Indra Dyaus the Asura hath bowed him down, to Indra mighty earth with wide extending tracts, to win the light, with widespread tracts.

"All gods of one accord have set Indra in front, preeminent."

I. 131. 1.

"Thou, god without a second." I. 32, 12.

Indra is praised for his capacity to drink Soma :

"Then Indra at a single draught drank the contents of thirty pails,

Pails that were filled with Soma juice." VII. 66. 4.

Indra thus boasts of his greatness after drinking Soma :

11. "One of my flanks is in the sky ; I let the other trail below ; Have I not drunk of Soma-juice ?"

12. I, greatest of the mighty ones, am lifted to the firmament : Have I not drunk of Soma-juice ?" X. 119.

Some of his achievements under its influence have already been quoted.

Agni is thus addressed :

"Agni I hold as herald, the munificent, the gracious, son of strength, who knoweth all that live, as holy singer, knowing all." I. 127. 1.

"To Agni I present a newer mightier hymn, I bring my words and song unto the son of strength,

Who, offspring of the waters, bearing precious things, sits on the earth, in season, dear invoking priest." I. 143. 1.

The Maruts are thus addressed :

"Come hither Maruts, on your lightning-laden cars, sounding with sweet songs, armed with lances, winged with steeds." I. 88, 1.

The gods are sometimes praised for their beauty, "One of the epithets most commonly applied to Indra," says Muir, is *susipra*, or *prini*, in the interpretation of which Sayana wavers between 'the lord with handsome cheeks or nose.' Agni is called "lord of the lovely look." II. 7, 8.

The "broad-tressed Sinivali is thus described :"

"With lovely fingers, lovely arms, prolific Mother of many sons— Present the sacred gifts to her, to sinivali queen of men." II. 32, 7.

#### BLESSINGS ASKED.

The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald says :

"One thing is very clear to every reader of the Veda, that the sires of the hymnists were ever towards cows, horses, offspring (sons), long life on earth, victory over their earthly enemies, etc. ; but the requests for spiritual blessings, or an inheritance in heaven, immortality, were very few in number, and not very clearly expressed. The visible and sensible, as far as their hopes and wishes

were concerned, occupied their thoughts, almost to the complete exclusion of the invisible and the spiritual.”\*

**Wealth.**—This, in one form or another, is the subject of nearly every prayer, or forms one of the petitions, “Bring us the wealth for which we long” (VIII. 45, 42) is the conclusion in many hymns.

The ancient Aryans were largely a pastoral people. Professor Bhattacharyya infers this from “cows, the recovery of cows, the plunder of cows, the increase of cows and gifts of cows being described in the Rig-Veda in such permutations and combinations.” Cows and horses form the refrain in the following hymn addressed to Indra :

1. “O Soma-drinker, ever true, utterly hopeless though we be  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of kin  
In thousands, O most wealthy one.
2. O Lord of strength, whose jaws are strong, great deeds a  
thine, the powerful:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of kin  
In thousands, O most wealthy one.” I. 29.

The following are other requests :

- “O Indu, Soma, send us now great opulence from every side,  
Pour on us treasures thousandfold.” IX. 40. 40. 3.  
“Pour out on us abundant food, when thou art pressed, O Ind  
wealth  
In kine and gold and steeds and strength.” IX. 41, 4.  
“Will ye then, O Maruts, grant us riches, durable, rich in m  
defying onslaught,  
A hundred, thousand-fold, ever increasing ? I. 64, 15.  
Knowing our chief felicity, O Agni bring hither ample rich  
to our nobles.” VII. 1, 24.  
“O wondrous Indra, bring us wondrous riches.” VII. 20. 7.

At the commencement of ploughing, the following verse was repeated with an offering of fire :

- “Auspicious Sita, come thou near : we venerate and worship  
thee,  
That thou mayst bless and prosper us and bring us fruits abundantly.” IV. 57. 6.

A hymn to Varuna, in which deliverance from sin is sought ends with, “King, may I never lack well-ordered riches.” II. 2. 11.

**Rain.**—This is frequently asked. Indra is chiefly adored because he slays with his bolts the demon who withholds the rain. Parjanya is thus addressed :

- “Lift up the mighty vessel, pour down water, and let the liberated streams rush forward.

---

\* *The Vedic Religion*, pp. 48, 40. † Tagore Law Lectures, p. 119.

Saturate both the earth and heaven with fatness, and for the cows let there be drink abundant." V. 83. 8.

**Sons.**—The following are a few examples :

"Men yearn for children to prolong their line, and are not disappointed in their hope." I. 68. 4.

"May the wealth-giver (Agni) grant us wealth with heroes (sons).

May the wealth-giver grant us food with offspring." I. 96. 8.

"Help us to wealth, exceeding good and glorious, abundant, rich in children and their progeny." II. 2. 12.

"To us be born a son and spreading offspring, Agni, be this thy gracious will to us-ward." III. 6. 11.

"Brihaspati, may we be lords of riches, with noble progeny, and store of heroes." IV. 50. 6.

**Long Life.**—The Aryans, coming from a cold country, first reckoned their years by "winters." Probably in later hymns autumns" are substituted.

"Grant unto us to see a hundred autumns; ours be the happy lives of our forefathers." II. 27. 10.

"Long let our life, O Agni, be extended." IV. 12. 6.

"Accept, O Maruts, graciously this hymn of mine that we may live a hundred winters through its power." V. 54. 15.

"Be gracious, Indra, let my days be lengthened." VI. 47. 10.

**Preservation from Danger.**—Amidst constant wars with the origines, this request frequently occurs in the hymns. But safety also sought from other dangers, as snake bites.

"In thy kind grace (Indra) and favour may we still be strong : expose us not to any foe's attack.

With manifold assistance guard and succour us, and bring us to felicity." VIII. 3. 2.

"May wealthy Indra as our good protector, lord of all treasures, favour us with succour,

Baffle our foes, and give us rest and safety." VI. 47. 12.

"Savitar, god, send far away all sorrows and calamities, And send us only what is good." V. 82. 5.

"Give us not up to any evil creature, as spoil to wolf or she-wolf, O ye holy." VI. 51. 6.

"May they, Earth, Aditi, Indra, Bhaga, Pushan increase our laud, increase the fivefold people.

"Giving good help, good refuge, goodly guidance, be they our good deliverers, good protectors." VI. 51. 11.

"Not to the fanged that bites, not to the toothless : give not us up, thou conqueror to the spoiler." I. 190. 5.

**Destruction of Enemies.**—Next to wealth, this is one of the most frequent petitions. Some prayers include all who are friendly ; others single out individuals.

"Destroy this ass, O Indra, who in tones discordant brays thee."

"Slay each reviler, and destroy him who in secret injures us I. 29, 5, 7.

"O Agni, radiant one, to whom the holy oil is poured, burn our enemies whom fiends protect." I. 12, 5.

"Cast thy dart knowing, thunderer, at the Dasyu;" I. 103,

"Whatever mortal with the power of demons fain would injure

May he, impetuous, suffer harm by his own deeds." VIII. 18,

"Crunch up on every side the dogs who bark at us: slay ye our foes, O Asvins." I. 182, 4.

"Consume for ever all demons and sorcerers, consume thou our devouring fiend." I. 36, 20.

"Drive from us with thy tongue, O god, the man who doeth our deeds,

The mortal who would strike us dead." VI. 16, 32.

1. Annihilate the fools, slay them and burn them up; Chase them away from us, pierce the voracious ones.
2. Against the foe of prayer, devourer of raw flesh, the vile fiend fierce of eye, keep ye perpetual hate.
10. The fiend, O Agni, who designs to injure the essence of our folk, kine, steeds, of bodies,  
May he, the adversary, thief, and robber, sink to destruction both himself and offspring.
11. "May he be swept away, himself and children. May all the three earths press him down beneath them.  
May his fair glory, O ye gods, be blighted, who in the day or night would fain destroy us. VII. 104.

Quotations have been given from Hymn 87 Book X. addressed to Agni, the Slayer of Rakshasas.

**Pardon of Sin.**—Prayers of this nature chiefly occur in the hymns to Varuna, the principal of which have been quoted. A few other extracts may be given:

"Aditi, Mitra, Varuna, forgive us however we have erred and sinned against you." II. 27. 14.

"Prolong our days of life (ye Asvins), wipe out our trespasses." I. 157. 4.

"Most youthful god (Agni) whatever sin, through folly, here in the world of men we have committed,

Before great Aditi make thou us sinless: remit entirely, Agni our offences." IV. 12. 4.

"Let us not suffer for the sins of others, nor do the deed which ye, O Vasus, punish." VI. 51. 7.

"What secret sin or open stirs their (Maruts) anger, that we implore the swift ones to forgive us." VII. 58. 5.

"That he, the bounteous god (Brihaspati) may find us sinless who giveth at a distance like a father." VII. 97, 2.

"Save us (Visvedevas) from uncommitted and committed sin preserve us from all sin to-day for happiness." X. 63. 8.

**Future World.**—The references to this are few, and chiefly in the Ninth and Tenth Books. The great desire of the *Yajnas* was to enjoy the present life.

"The givers of rich meeds are made immortal; the givers of rich fees prolong their life time." I. 125, 6.

"May I attain to that his well loved mansion when men devoted to the gods are happy." I. 154, 5.

"We pray for rain, your boon (Mitra-Varuna) and immortality." V. 63, 2.

"When I and Indra mount high up to the bright one's place and home.

"We, having drunk of meath, will reach his seat whose friends are three times seven." VIII. 38, 7.

"We have drunk Soma and became immortal; we have attained the light, the gods discovered." VIII. 48, 3.

"High up in heaven abide the guerdon-givers; they who give steeds dwell with the Sun for ever.

They who give gold are blest with life eternal: they who give robes protect their lives, O Soma." X. 107, 2.

The hymn of the Rig-Veda, says Muir, "contain, as far as I am aware, no permanent mention of the future punishment of the wicked. Nevertheless Yama is to some extent an object of terror."\*

#### ARE THE VEDAS A DIVINE REVELATION ?

**Supposed Wisdom of the Ancients.**—An error has prevailed in countries and in all ages to regard persons who lived long ago the ancients—very old and very wise,—while people now living are looked upon as children. The very opposite is the case. *We are the ancients*; those who lived long ago are the children. The world is thousands of years older now than it was then.

In Vedic times there were no books, and printing was unknown. All the valuable knowledge which has been gained in any quarter of the globe during the last twenty-five centuries is now at command. During these many years, lakhs of learned men have been adding to our stores. Every fresh discovery is now flashed by the electric telegraph, and by means of newspapers is at once made known to the whole civilised world.

The late distinguished Indian statesman, Sir Madhava Row, says in a Convocation Address:

"Avoid the mischievous error of supposing that our ancient forefathers were wiser than men of the present times. It cannot be true. Every year of an individual's life he acquires additional knowledge. Knowledge thus goes on accumulating year by year. Similarly every generation adds to the knowledge of the previous generation. Under such a process the accumulation of knowledge in a century is very large.

To assert therefore that men possessed more knowledge scores of centuries ago than at the present day is manifestly absurd.

Even assuming intellectual equality between the ancients and moderns, men of modern times have had enormous advantages over the of ancient times for the acquisition of knowledge. Our field of observation, our facilities for observation, our instruments of observation, our highly elaborated methods of calculation, our means of publishing the results of observation, of getting the results scrutinized, questioned, compared, discussed and variously verified, are infinitely greater than those of remote generations. The explorations of the ancients were fragmentary and superficial.

The whole world is now one field of observation. An enormous intellectual committee of the whole civilized human race is ceaselessly sitting from generation to generation, and is ceaselessly working for the collection and augmentation of human knowledge.

Calmly and carefully reflect and you are certain to agree with me. Hesitate not therefore to prefer modern knowledge to ancient knowledge. A blind belief in the omniscience of our forefathers is mischief because it perpetuates errors and tends to stagnation.\*

An adult deserves no credit for being wiser than when a young child. The present generation should be,

“The heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time.”

The Vedas represent the comparative *Childhood of the World*.  
**Estimates of the Vedas.**—Two classes of persons entertain the most exalted notions of the Vedas. First those who *know nothing of them*. This includes the great mass of the people of India, educated and uneducated. According to the Latin proverb, “Everything of which we are ignorant is taken for something magnificent.” The other class consists of those who *know nothing else*. Such are the pandits, frogs in a well, and men like Dayananda Sarasvati. The latter held that whatever was not to be found in the Vedas was false or useless; whatever was found in the Vedas was beyond the reach of controversy.

Max Müller thus describes the conclusion arrived at by intelligent Indians:

“The friends of Rammohan Roy, honest and fearless as they have always proved themselves to be, sent some young scholars to Benares to study the Vedas and to report on their contents. As soon as the report was received, Debendranath Tagore, the head of the Brahmo Samaj, said at once that, venerable as the Vedas might be as relics of a former age, they contained so much that was childish, erroneous, and impossible as to make their descent from a divine source utterly untenable.”†

Mr. K. K. Bhattacharyya, late Professor of Sanskrit in Presidency College, Calcutta, in his Tagore Law Lecture

\* Madras Convocation Addresses, 8vo. 231 pp. 8 As. Post-free. Sold by Mr. A. Scott, Tract Depot, Madras.  
 † Biographical Essays, pp. 168, 169.

scribes the thousand hymns of the Rig-Veda as a "dreary wilderness, at but distant intervals redeemed by slight flashes of fire or quaint flights of fancy." (p. 119.)

Professor Max Müller has spent many years, in editing the Rig-Veda, with the commentary of Sayana. He is not likely to devalue it—rather the reverse. He himself makes the following confession in his "Preface to the Sacred Books of the East":—

"Scholars also who have devoted their life either to the editing of the original texts or to the careful interpretation of some of the sacred books, more inclined, after they have disinterred from a heap of rubbish the solitary fragments of pure gold, to exhibit these treasures only in order to display all the refuse from which they had to extract them. I do not blame them for this, perhaps I should feel that I was open to the same blame myself, for it is but natural that scholars in their joy at finding one or two fragrant fruits or flowers should gladly forget the blemishes and thorns that had to be thrown aside in the course of their work." Page x.

In his Lecture on the Vedas he expresses the following opinion of the hymns :—

"The historical importance of the Veda can hardly be exaggerated, but its intrinsic merit, and particularly the beauty or elevation of its sentiments, have by many been rated far too high. Large numbers of the oldest hymns are childish in the extreme: tedious, low, common-place. The gods are constantly invoked to protect their worshippers, to grant them food, large flocks, large families, and a long life; for all which rewards they are to be rewarded by the praises and sacrifices offered day after day, or at certain seasons of the year. But hidden in this rubbish there are precious stones."

"I remind you again that the Veda contains a great deal of what is childish and foolish, though very little of what is bad and objectionable. Some of its poets ascribe to the gods sentiments and passions unworthy of the deity, such as anger, revenge, delight in material sacrifices; they likewise represent human nature on a low level of selfishness and worldliness. Many hymns are utterly unmeaning and insipid, and we must search patiently before we meet, here and there, with sentiments that come from the depth of the soul, and with prayers in which we could join ourselves."

The hymns which have been quoted in full are some of the most interesting, and scarcely give a fair general idea of the contents.

The repetitions are endless, the same epithets and images are piled first to one and then to another of the gods. *Give us wealth*, he request that runs through nearly the whole of them.

The following are some of the reasons why the Vedas cannot be accepted as a revelation from the mouth of Brahma, given crores of years ago:

1. *The writers of the hymns, in many cases, claim to be their horses, and internal evidence shows that they were composed when Aryans were entering India.*



These points have been already noticed so fully (see pp. 13-14) that it is unnecessary to recapitulate what has been said.

*The low conceptions given of God show that the writers were not inspired.*

The Vedas unquestionably teach polytheism; but as every intelligent man is now a monotheist, attempts are made to show that the "thrice eleven" deities mean only one God.

The inconsistent accounts of the gods show that they are mere inventions according to the fancies of the poet. As already quoted "The father is sometimes the son, the brother is the husband, and she who in one hymn is the mother, is in another the wife."

The Aryans framed their gods after themselves. They bargain with their gods just as they did with one another; they flatter them: they offered them sweet things and told them to be good. They themselves were fond of Soma-beer; so they thought it was with Indra. Just as the smell of liquor attracts the drunkard, so soon as Indra knew of some one preparing Soma-beer, he mounts his chariot and drove to the place. Grant that Indra was fond of Soma-beer, is it to be supposed that the king of heaven could not get it except by coming to some Aryan peasant's home. One hymn says that (the worshipper) brings Indra to drink the Soma by rapid seizure, like a loaded horse (by a halter). It is said of the Asvins, "ye fly to our oblations like a pair of hawks." (VIII. 35. 9)

The gods are supposed to have wives like the Hindus, and the disputes of rival wives in modern times are reproduced in the heaven of Indra.

3. *Superstitious beliefs, now exploded, are accepted as true.* There is the firm faith in magical arts which still prevails among uncivilised nations. To prevent others from learning the hymns, the Brahmans taught that the mispronunciation of a word would bring down the anger of the gods. The influence ascribed to the different metres in which a hymn is composed has been quoted (see pp. 3, 4). The repetition of certain words is supposed to have a magical effect. The same power is ascribed to certain plants. The Hindu belief that eclipses are caused by an Asura seizing the sun and moon, held, and the sun expresses gratitude to the Rishi Atri for deliverance through his prayer (V. 40. 5-9).

A few charms are found even in the Rîg-Veda. The Atharva Veda is largely a collection of them. Stones, bones, shells, herbs and other so-called fetishes, like those of African negroes, appear in it. In the Yajur-Veda, the queen of a childless king, in order to have a son, is to lie all night embracing a dead horse. No sensible man can now believe any such things.

4. *The worldly character of the hymns shows their origin.*

Bishop Caldwell justly says: "If any person reads the hymns of the Vedas for the first time, he will be struck with surprise at the utterly worldly, unethical, unspiritual tone by which they are

generally pervaded." The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald expresses the same opinion :

"In the Veda, man is generally looked upon as essentially of this world. He is constantly represented as taken up with the things of this world, what he sees, hears, tastes, and feels in it,—the glowing of the fire, the flashing of the lightning, the howling of the storm, the rushing of the wind, the splash of the rain, the rising and setting of the sun, the dawning and gloaming of the day, the number of his cows, camels, sons, and horses, the burning of his enemies' towns and the carrying off booty, the slaughter of the Dasyus and Rakshasas, the offering of *ghi* and Soma to Indra and Agni in the hope of receiving more sons and cattle and slaying more enemies. These and such like things seem to constitute the whole duty of man as he is represented in the hymns of the Rig-veda. As a matter of fact, there is no attempt in the Vedas, or indeed in modern Hinduism, to give a correct conception of man's duties."\*

The Rishis, from whom better things might have been expected, were as worldly as the common people. Instead of wishing to live ascetic lives, "give us the wealth for which we yearn," is the grand theme of their hymns. Several illustrative quotations have already been given.

The Rishis did not wish to live in huts. One of them prays thus :

"We solicit of the divine protector of the Maruts, of the Asvins, of Mitra, and of Varuna, a spacious dwelling for our welfare. Mitra, Aryaman, Varuna, and Maruts, grant us a secure, excellent, and well-peopled dwelling, a three-fold shelter."

Another Rishi prays not only that Pushan should protect him in all his doings, but also "bestow on us our share of maids." K. 67, 10.

Besides praying directly for wealth, the Rishis sought to gain it by invoking blessings on those who bestowed gifts, and by urging those who offered no oblations. Max Müller says :

"There is a whole class of hymns commonly called *danastutis*, or praises of gifts. They are the thanksgiving of certain priests for presents received from their royal patrons. The liberality of their royal patrons is held up to the admiration and imitation of later generations in stories which had to be repeated at the sacrifices."†

The following are some illustrative extracts :

When will he (Indra) trample, like a weed; the man who hath no gifts for him? I. 84. 8.

"Slay the niggards." I. 184. 2.

"Consumer of the churlish niggard." VI. 61. 1.

"Wealth comes not to the niggard churl." VII. 32. 21.

For those who give rich meeds are all these splendours, for those who give rich meeds suns shine in heaven.

"Let afflictions fall upon the niggard." I. 125. 6, 7.

\* *The Vedic Religion*, p. 229.

† *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 493.

Some of the Rishis either received immense gifts or told great lies. Brahmatithi says:

37. "As Kasu, Chedi's son, gave me a hundred head of buffaloes, an ten thousand kine.
38. He who hath given me for mine own ten kings like gold to lay upon.
39. No man, not any, goes upon the path on which the Chedis walk. No other prince, no folk is held more liberal of gifts than the VIII. 5.

The Rishi Vasa Asvya thus praises the liberality of Prithusrava the son of Kanita.

21. "Now let the godless man approach who hath received reward great  
As Vasa Asvya, when this light of morning dawned, received from Prithusravas, from Kanita's son.
22. Steeds sixty thousand and ten thousand kine, and twenty thousand and camels I obtained;  
Ten hundred brown in hue, and other ten red in three spots in all ten thousand kine.
29. Ten browns that make my wealth increase, fleet steeds whose tails are long and fair,  
Turn with swift whirl my chariot wheel;
24. The gifts which Prithusravas gave, Kanita's son munificent.  
He gave a chariot wrought of gold; the prince was passing beautiful, and won himself most lofty fame.
33. And now to Vasa Asvya here this stately woman\* is led forth  
Adorned with ornaments of gold." VIII. 46.

5. *The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man are not acknowledged.*—The truth of this great doctrine is now generally admitted by intelligent Hindus. Neither is found in the Vedas. It is true that the gods are asked to give like a father but this is very different from the acknowledgment that we derived our being from God and of that endearing relationship expressed by the title "Our Father in heaven." The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald says:

"There was a recognition of a common relationship between all the Aryans as such, as descended from one common father Manu. The rest of the human race seems to have been regarded as altogether outside the pale of mercy or the ordinary demands of humanity."

"The horizon of the Rishi, is confined almost invariably to himself. He prays for the happiness of neither wife nor child, nor for the good of his village or his clan, nor yet for his nation or people. His eye is shut to the sufferings of his fellows. He manifests no common joys, any more than common sorrows."

---

\* Probably the wife of the conquered king.

But there is much that is worse than this negative side. Christianity teaches, "Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself." We should forgive and pray for our enemies. Jesus Christ says: "Love our enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

The Aryans not only did not regard the non-Aryan races, and even some Aryans, as brothers; they simply wished their destruction and to obtain their wealth.

"Slay ye our Aryan foes, O lord of heroes, slay our Dasa foes : Drive all our enemies away : " VI. 60, 6.

"Slay every one who pours no gift, who hard to reach, delights thee not.

Bestow on us what wealth he hath; this even the worshipper awaits." I. 176, 4.

"Tear thou asunder, as of old, like tangles of a creeping plant, Demolish thou the Dasa's might. May we with Indra's help divide the treasure he hath gathered up. Let all the others die away." VIII. 40. 6.

Numerous other passage of similar import might be quoted.

6. *The Vedas do not contain any satisfactory statement as to the way of salvation or human duty.*

The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald says: "No Rishi, so far as I am aware, has ever claimed to be commissioned by God or by the gods, or by any of the gods, to enlighten men in regard to his will concerning men, or men's duties to God, or to one another. No one claimed to have any authoritative announcement to make as to whence man came, or whether he is going, what is his chief end here or hereafter."

Libations of the Soma juice and the offering of sacrifices are the chief means prescribed for the attainment of blessings. No intelligent man of the present time will be satisfied with such recommendations.

Nothing is said about labours of love, or acts of charity towards the poor, the widow, or the orphan.

**Points of Superiority over later Hinduism.**—Only two of the principal will be mentioned.

1. *The modern Caste System did not exist in Vedic Times.*—Caste is noticed only in a single verse of a comparatively modern hymn.

Max Müller first printed the whole of the Rig-Veda with the commentary of Sayana; and he has devoted nearly his entire life to its study under the most favourable circumstances. What does he say?

"There is no authority whatever in the hymns of the Veda for the complicated system of castes. There is no law to prohibit the different

classes of the people from living together, from eating and drinking together; no law to prohibit the marriage of people belonging to different castes; no law to brand the offspring of such marriages with an indelible stigma. There is no law to sanction the blasphemous pretensions of a priesthood to divine honours, or the degradation of any human being to a state below the animal." *Ohips*. Vol. II.

At present the question of sea-voyages is greatly agitated among the Hindus. The old Aryans had no such scruples. They rather gloried in their sea-voyages.

2. *Women occupied a higher position than at present.*—There were no infant marriages. Women, in some cases at least, were allowed to choose their husbands. Widows were permitted to re-marry. Women were not secluded. The wife took part in sacrifices. So far from women being prohibited from religious teaching, some of the hymn of the Rig-Veda were written by female Rishis, e. g., X. 39, 40 by Ghoshâ, VIII. 80 by Apalâ, &c.

**Truths in the Vedas.**—It is admitted that along with serious errors, the Vedas contain some great truths, either plainly expressed or dimly shadowed forth. The following may be mentioned:

1. *Prayer.*—The Aryans were, in their way, a religious people. They daily acknowledged their dependence upon the gods, and sought every blessing from them. In this they set us an example.

2. *Praise.*—The gods are praised for what they are, and for what they have done for man. This feeling of thankfulness is highly to be commended.

3. *An acknowledgment of God's Omniscience.*—Scoffers have said, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" On the contrary, in the Vedas, even the winkings of men are said to be known to Varuna.

4. *A confession of Sinfulness.*—It is true that these are not very numerous, but they occur, especially in hymns to Varuna. Thus in Book X. 89, 3, there is the following:

"O bright and powerful god, through want of strength I erred  
and went astray:  
Have mercy, spare me, mighty lord."

In some later Hindu writings the feeling is more strongly expressed. The following daily confession is made by some Brahmans:

Pâpo'ham pâpakarmâham pâpâtma pâpasambhavah |

"I am sin, I commit sin; my soul is sinful; I am conceived in sin." This acknowledgment is true, and deserves to be made daily by every man. Our sins in thought, word, and deed, are numberless. How to be released from them should be the earnest desire of every one.

5. *Mediation.*—There are few doctrines in the Christian

religion to which Hindus more object than to mediation, but it is distinctly found in the Vedas. Max Müller calls Agni "the messenger and mediator between God and men." Agni, it is said "goes wisely between these two creations (heaven and earth, gods and men) like friendly messenger between two hamlets." He announces to the gods the hymns, and conveys to them the oblations of their worshippers.

But mediation is not found merely in the Vedas. In every-day life it is universally acted upon. When any one has offended another, it is a common thing to seek reconciliation through a friend; favour, such as an office, is often sought through the intervention of a person known to both.

In one sense, however, mediation is not necessary. We can offer our prayers direct to God without the intervention of a priest on earth.

6. *Sacrifice*.—One of the chief doctrines of Christianity is that the Son of God, for man's redemption, became incarnate, and offered death upon the cross as a sacrifice for sin. The late Rev. Dr. Krishna Mohun Banerjee, for many years one of the Sanskrit Examiners of the Calcutta University, thus shows how this doctrine is shadowed forth in Vedic Hinduism :

The two propositions which he enunciates are :—

1st. That the fundamental principles of Christian doctrine in relation to the salvation of the world find a remarkable counterpart in the Vedic principles of primitive Hinduism in relation to the destruction of sin, and the redemption of the sinner by the efficacy of Sacrifice, itself a figure of *Prajápati*, the Lord and Saviour of the creation, who had given himself up as an offering for that purpose.

2ndly. That the meaning of "*Prajápati*," an appellative, variously described as a *Purusha*, begotten in the beginning, as *iswakarma*, the creator of all singularly coincides with the meaning of the name and offices of the historical reality JESUS CHRIST, and that no other person than Jesus of Nazareth has ever appeared in the world claiming the character and position of the self-sacrificing *Prajápati*, at the same time both mortal and immortal.

The proofs of these propositions are next submitted :—

The first and foremost rites of religion which the Indo-Aryans regularly celebrated, and on which they most firmly relied as the great cure for all the evils of life, and the secret of all success in the world, were *sacrificial rites*. Not idolatrous worship, not observances of caste, not any popular ceremony of our days, but *yajna* (sacrifice) and its connectives were the religious rites cherished by them.

The authorship of the institution is attributed to "Creation's Lord" himself. The world was called into being by virtue of sacrifice and is still upheld by its force, being indeed its "navel." Rig-Veda I. 164, 35.

Sacrifice offered according to the true way—the right path—has been held in the Rik, Yajur, and Saman to be the good ferrying boat or raft

by which we may escape from sin. It was expressly declared to be the authorised means both for remission and annulment of sin.

The sacrificer offered the victim in place of himself. The Taittiriya Brahmana says, "The sacrificer is the victim; it takes the sacrificer to the blessed place." Sacrifice was regarded as the way of deliverance from sin. The Rig-Veda x. 133. 6, says, "Do thou, by means of sacrifice, take away from us all sin." The Tandya Maha Brahmana of the Saman Veda says of sacrifice: "Whatever sins we have committed by day or by night, thou art the annulment thereof. Whatever sins we have committed, knowingly or unknowingly, thou art the annulment thereof. Thou art the annulment of sin—of sin."

Sacrifice was regarded as the destroyer of Death. In the Taittiriya Aranyaka it is said, "O Death! the thousand myriads of thy bands for the destruction of mortals we annul them all by the mysterious power of sacrifice." Sacrifice opens the way to heaven. "Whosoever desires the felicity of heaven, let him perform sacrifices in the right way."

The secret of this extreme importance attached to sacrifice, and the key to the proper understanding of the whole subject was the self-sacrifice of *Prajapati*, the Lord or Supporter of the Creation, the "*Purusha*, begotten before the world," "the *Viswakarma*, the author of the universe." The idea is found in all the three great Vedas—Rik, Yajus, and Saman—in Sanhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads. The Divine *Purusha* who gave himself up as a sacrifice for the Devas, i. e., emancipated mortals, had, it is said, desired and got a mortal body fit for sacrifice, and himself became half mortal and half immortal.

The Yajus puts into the mouth of the Divine Self-sacrificer the words: "Let me offer myself in all creatures, and all creatures in myself." The Satapatha Brahmana says, "The Lord of creatures gave himself for them for He became their sacrifice." The Taittiriya Aranyaka contains the following: "They slew *Purusha* the victim—*Purusha* who was born from the beginning." The Rig Veda styles him, "the giver of himself, the giver of strength, whose shadow, whose death, is immortality."

The world was condemned and offered for sacrifice, that is to say, was devoted to destruction, for sin; and the Divine Saviour then offered Himself for its deliverance. The Bible says, "If one died for all, then were all dead." The Veda says conversely: *Because all were devoted to destruction, therefore one died for all.*

All that has just been shown appertaining to the sacrifice of *Prajapati* curiously resembles the Biblical description of CHRIST as God and man, our very Emmanuel (God with us,) mortal and immortal, who "hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour," of whom all previous sacrifices were but figures and reflections, who by His sacrifice or death hath "vanquished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

The Vedic ideal of *Prajapati*, as we have seen, singularly approximates to the above description of our Lord, and therefore remarkably confirms the saving mysteries of Christianity.

Christian evangelists when they draw our attention to the claim of Gospel truth do not utter things which can be called *strange* to Indian

ars. Salvation from sin by the death of a Saviour, who was God and man himself, was a conception which had administered consolation to our ancient *Rishis*, and may yet, in a higher form, and to a greater degree, do the same for all India.

I proceed now to discuss the second proposition. The name *Prajapati* not only means "the Lord of creatures," but also "the supporter, feeder, and deliverer of his creatures." The great Vedic commentator *Sayana* interprets it in that wider sense. The Lord and Master has to feed and maintain his servants and subjects. The name *Jesus*, in the Hebrew, means the same. The radical terms stands for *help, deliverance, salvation*. And that name was given Him because He would *save* His people from their sins. In the prophecy cited by St. Matthew, He is described as a leader or ruler, who "shall feed my people Israel." He is therefore to His people what a shepherd is to his flock—both leader, ruler, and feeder. The same is the import of *pati*; the name *Prajapati*, therefore, singularly corresponds to the name *JESUS*.

Not a single character in the Hindu pantheon, or in the pantheon of any other nation, has claimed the position of one who offered himself as a sacrifice for the benefit of humanity. There is, as all educated persons must know, only one historical person, *Jesus of Nazareth*, whose name and position correspond to that of the Vedic ideal—one mortal and immortal—who sacrificed himself for mankind. By the process of exhaustion you may conclude that *Jesus* is the true *Prajapati*, the true Saviour of the world, "the only name given among men whereby we must be saved."

I think I may therefore declare our second proposition to be also demonstrated. *CHRIST* is the true *Prajapati*—the true *Purusha* begotten in the beginning before all worlds, and Himself both God and man. The doctrines of saving sacrifice, the "primary religious rites" of the *Rig-Veda*,—of the double character, priest and victim, variously called *Prajapati*, *Purusha* and *Visvakarma*,—of the Ark by which we escape the waves of this sinful world—these doctrines I say, which had appeared in our Vedas amid much rubbish, and things worse than rubbish, may be viewed as fragments of diamonds sparkling amid dust and mud, testifying to some invisible fabric of which they were component parts, and bearing witness like planets over a dark horizon to the absent sun of whom their refugence was but a feeble reflection.

The Christian, with the wide sympathy which incites him to invite all nations to the faith of Christ, can only rejoice that the *Jesus* of the Gospels responds to the self-sacrificing *Prajapati* of the Vedas, and that the evangelist's chief work will be to exhibit before his neighbours and fellow-subjects the true Ark of salvation—that true "vessel of sacrifice by which we may escape all sin." He will only have to exhibit for the faith of the Hindus the real personality of the true *Purusha*, "begotten before the worlds," mortal and yet divine, "whose shadow, whose death is immortality itself."

The Veda tells us of the ark of Salvation by which sin may be escaped, and repeatedly exhorts us to embark in it. The ark of Salvation, with the *Purusha* begotten in the beginning as its head, can be no other than the Church of Christ. In addition then to the exhortations of Christian



evangelists, you have your own Veda calling on you to embark on the very Ark, if you desire to be delivered from the waves of sin.\*

### A RETURN TO VEDIC HINDUISM IMPOSSIBLE.

#### *An appeal to Educated Hindus.*

Thoughtful Hindus, dissatisfied with their religion as exhibited in the Epic poems and Puranas, may have hoped to find in the Vedas a pure system which might meet in the wants of their souls. Such an idea can be entertained only by those who are unacquainted with the Vedas or who give the hymns a meaning directly the opposite to the sense in which they were understood by their authors. Among the latter are the Arya Samajists, noticed in the Appendix.

In some respects, it is true, the Vedas may be followed. As already mentioned, caste, characterised by Sir H. S. Maine in his *Ancient Law* as "the most blighting and disastrous of human institutions," is not found in them. Women enjoyed more liberty and took a higher position. In both respects a return to the Vedic system may be made with advantage.

But it is different with regard to still more important questions. Into the lips of one of the old Rishi the words of Tennyson might well be put,

"What am I?  
An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no-language but a cry."

The Vedas represent the childhood of religion, and cannot now be our guide.

1. *You cannot go back to the gods of the Vedas.*—You cannot believe in "thrice eleven" deities. Heaven and earth, sun and moon, the clouds, the dawn, can never be endowed in your minds with intelligence, with wrath or mercy. No imagination can make them anything else to you than what they are:—varied, beautiful forms of matter, but matter still. You feel that you should adore the great Creator Himself, and not the objects He has made.

A hymn found in the Bible, sung by a Rajarishi nearly three thousand years ago, expresses the feelings we ought to entertain:

"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! who hast set Thy glory above the heavens. When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which Thou hast ordained,—what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of

---

\* The foregoing extracts are abridged from *The Relation between Christianity and Hinduism*. 32 pp. ‡ Anna. Sold by Mr. A. T. Scott, Madras and at other Tract Depôts. A fuller explanation is given in Dr. Banerjee's *Arian Witness to Christianity*.

man that thou visitest him? O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"

No enlightened man can accept the polytheism of the Vedas.

2. *You cannot offer the PRAYERS of the Vedas.*—You need something more than cows and horses, health and wealth, the destruction of public and domestic enemies. It is true that there are petitions for the pardon of sin addressed specially to Varuna, but here are few and far between.

3. *You cannot make the OFFERINGS of the Vedas.*—You cannot invite Indra to drink the Soma juice "like a thirsty stag;" you cannot sacrifice buffaloes, bullocks, cows and sheep; you cannot perform the *ashvamedha*. These were but shadows of the true sacrifice, dimly set forth in what is said of Prajāpati.

It must be acknowledged by every thoughtful, intelligent Hindu, that the religion of the Vedas does not meet the spiritual wants of man.

### A NATIONAL RELIGION.

India is the land of caste and exclusiveness; all beyond the pale of Aryavarta are impure Mlechhas. This caste feeling, under the guise of patriotism, has, especially in Bengal, prompted the cry for a *National Religion*. It is considered degrading for India to have any other religion than its own.

It may first be remarked that there is no national science. Keshub Chunder Sen justly says: "Is there an astronomy for the East and another for the West? Is there an Asiatic optics as distinguished from European optics? Science is one. It is one yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the same in the East and the West; it recognises neither caste, nor colour, nor nationality. It is God's science, the eternal verity of things."

It is the same with religion. If each country had its own god there might be different religions; but all enlightened men are now agreed that there is only one God, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the Universe. The Brotherhood of Man is similarly acknowledged:

"Children, we are all  
Of one great Father, in whatever clime,  
His providence hath cast the seed of life;  
All tongues, all colours."

Since God is one and all men are alike His children, it is reasonable to suppose that he has given only one religion.

The most enlightened countries in Europe and America accepted a religion first made known to them by Asiatics, and did not reject it from a false patriotism, saying, "We must have national religions." An Indian poet says "The disease that is born with us kills us; the medicine which is found on some far-off mountain cures our natal disease."

The cry for a National Religion originates in ignorance and pride. It will pass away. An educated Hindu does not contend for the Geography of his fathers, with its seas of sugar-cane juice, milk, and ghee. He has accepted "foreign" science. The Indian would be considered an idiot who urged his countrymen to stick to the national conveyances; palanquins and bullock carts, and refuse to travel by the "foreign" inventions of railways. A distinguished French Orientalist says that as India has already adopted the science and art of Christian nations, so she will one day spontaneously embrace their faith.

Of all false patriotism that is the worst which seeks by sophistry to defend erroneous religious beliefs because they are national. It promotes hypocrisy and disregard of truth among its advocates, while it is a grievous wrong to their ignorant countrymen, tending to perpetuate the reign of superstition.

The late Sir Madhava Row justly said, "*What is not True is not PATRIOTIC.*" There is an Indian proverb "Truth conquers." Any belief, any practice, not founded on truth, must eventually fall.

Instead of national religions, it is a far grander idea for the whole human race to fall down together as children at the feet of the true Dyans-Pitar.

Max Müller says:

"Thousands of years have passed since the Aryan nations separated to travel to the North and the South, the West and the East: they have each formed their languages, they have each founded empires and philosophies, they have each built temples and razed them to the ground; they have all grown older, and it may be wiser and better; but when they search for a name for what is most exalted and yet most dear to every one of us, when they wish to express both awe and love, the infinite, and the finite, they can but do what their old fathers did when gazing up to the eternal sky, and feeling the presence of a Being as far as far and as near as near can be; they can but combine the self-same words, and utter once more the primeval Aryan prayer, Heaven-father in that form which will endure for ever, 'Our Father which art in heaven.'"<sup>\*</sup>

#### A RELIGION WORTHY OF ACCEPTANCE.

It has been shown that an enlightened, thoughtful Hindu cannot accept the creed of the Vedas, considered the highest standards of his religion. It may be compared to a broken cistern which can hold no water to satisfy the thirst. But his attention is directed to a fountain of living water, freely offered to all.

Christianity is worthy of acceptance because it presents a Deity deserving the most profound reverence and the warmest love, while it is also a religion exactly suited to our needs. These points may be noticed more in detail.

<sup>\*</sup> *Science of Religion*, p. 173.

1. **The Deity of Christianity.**—God in the Bible, is revealed under two aspects. He is the great *Creator* of the Universe. Hinduism has no Creator in the strict sense of the word. Matter or *Maya* is held to be eternal, and the nominal Creator merely forms anew. Souls are also held to be eternal.\* The more correct ideas now held by educated Hindus have been derived from Christianity. God is infinite in power, wisdom and goodness. His most glorious attribute is His holiness, in which He differs immeasurably from Hindu divinities.

The second aspect under which God is revealed in the Bible is that of *Father*. We are taught to address Him as "Our Father in heaven." He is rightly so called, because we derived our being from Him, because He supports us as a father supports his children, and because He bears a father's love toward us. We have been disobedient rebellious children, justly deserving to be shut out from His presence; but He earnestly invites us to return to Him, offering us forgiveness. To those who do so, He stands in a more endearing relation than before.

Our moral sense is outraged when we are asked to worship *Idra* or *Krishna*, *Vishnu* or *Siva*. On the other hand, the God of Christianity far transcends our loftiest conceptions.

It has also been said that Christianity is suited to our needs. The three great wants of man are the following:

1. **Pardon of Sin.**—The great cry of humanity is, "How shall man be just with his Maker?" Every one who thinks seriously must confess that he sins daily in thought, word and deed. Hinduism gives contradictory answers to the question, Can sin be forgiven? Many believe that it can be washed away by bathing in the Ganges or other supposed sacred waters. Even the repetition of the name of a god is thought to have this effect. On the other hand, according to the doctrine of *Karma*, pardon is impossible. Sankaracharya says that Brahma can no more interfere with *Karma* than one can bring wheat out of rice.

Brahmos, like other intelligent men, acknowledge that sin must not be removed by bathing, by the products of the cows, &c.; but they appear to adopt, in some measure, the doctrine of *Karma* supposing that sin must be punished by "adequate agonies." What suffering this involves who can tell?

It has been shown that the two great doctrines of mediation and sacrifice are found in Vedic Hinduism. In later books a third doctrine, that of incarnation, is taught. Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Whosoever religion fades and irreligion prevails, then I induce myself." All are embodied in Christianity. The remarks of the late Rev. Dr. Krishna Mohun Banerjee already quoted, p. 140—143) should be carefully studied.

\* See *Supposed and Real Doctrines of Hinduism as held by Educated Hindus*. By the Rev. Nehemiah Goreh. 32 pp. 1/2 An. Sold by Mr. A. T. Scott, Tract Depot, Madras.

Christianity shows how pardon may be obtained consistently with God's justice. God is the lawgiver of the universe. He is our King as well as our Father. If sin were pardoned without an atonement, it would be regarded as a slight thing, and men would be tempted to rebel against the Divine Government. God himself provided Saviour. He so loved men that He gave His only Son the Lord to become incarnate in this world, and die on their account. He bore the punishment due to our sin, He perfectly observed God's laws. He answers for the sins of those who accept Him as their Saviour, and covers them, as it were, with His robe of righteousness. Free pardon is now offered to all who seek it in the name of Jesus Christ.

2. **Holiness.**—While pardon of sin is a great blessing, it is not enough. We all have the disease of sin, which is more loathsome than the worst forms of leprosy. In God's sight, we are, as it were, covered from head to foot with putrid sores. In such a state we can never enter His holy heaven.

Hinduism offers no help in the attainment of holiness. Its principal deities are themselves represented as guilty of great crimes. No prayers for holiness can be addressed to them. No exhortation to lead a holy life are given in any Hindu temple. In some of them there are dancing girls, whose influence can only be corrupting. According to philosophic Hinduism, the highest duty is to refrain from all actions good or bad, and to meditate till a man believe in the blasphemous assertion *Aham Brahmasmi*, I am Brahma.

Christianity, besides pardon, offers to send a physician to cure the disease of sin—the Holy Spirit.

A physician employs medicines; so the Holy Spirit prescribes means for our recovery from sin, though it is He who gives efficacy to them all. They include the study of the Bible and other good books, prayer, public worship, watchfulness against sin, &c.

The progress made is often very slow, for the patients neglect greatly the medicines prescribed. Still, it is begun on earth and completed above.

3. **Heaven.**—The Empress of India has reigned more than fifty years; but before long her crown must be laid aside, and she must lie in the tomb like her long line of ancestors. Short-lived happiness cannot satisfy us. We need an eternity of joy.

Hindus hope to purchase heaven by their supposed good deeds by giving alms to beggars, &c. One of the most efficacious means prescribed is to take hold of a cow's tail at death, the animal being given to Brahmans.

Every intelligent man can see the worthlessness of such methods; but, in any case, a dying Hindu must leave the world in great alarm about the future. During his innumerable previous books, according to his idea, he may have committed some sin not yet expiated, and when he departs he may go to one of the fearful

ells described in the Puranas. Even at best, happiness is only temporary.

Christians do not hope to enter heaven on account of their own imposed good deeds. They confess that their best actions are defiled by sin and need forgiveness. They hope to be saved only through the spotless righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him their sins are forgiven and admission to heaven is obtained. At death the true Christian has no fear. As soon as death departs, his soul goes to paradise, there to be happy for ever in God's palace.

**Concluding Appeal.**—About a hundred generations have passed away since some of the Vedic hymns were written. The reader must sooner or later, follow them. It is the highest folly to think only of the world which we must so soon leave, and neglect that in which our eternal lot will be cast. Jesus Christ says, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

With heart-felt sorrow for the past, return to the one true God, saying, "Father I have sinned against Thee, and no more worthy be called Thy Son," and accept the blessings freely offered through Jesus Christ. You will then be received again into God's family as an adopted child. He will watch over you through life, causing all things to work together for your good, and prepare you for the eternal happiness in store for you.

The doctrines of Christianity are here only very briefly stated. The reader is referred to the books mentioned below\* but especially to the New Testament.

Follow the course urged upon you by your learned country man, M. Banerjee, who now, as it were, addresses you from the tomb:

"If it were possible for the hoary Rishis to reappear in the world, they themselves would exhort you, nay beseech you, implore you, perhaps also constrain you not to neglect so great a salvation; not to waver in your duty to acknowledge and embrace the true ajápati, the true Purusha begotten before the world, who died that you might live, who by death hath vanquished death, and bought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Denying CHRIST, whether actively or passively, you, virtually repudiate everything that is good. Embracing CHRIST, you will find in Him a strength and comfort which your ancient Rishis would have regarded a most valuable treasure had they lived in these days. You will find in Him everything worthy of your lineage, worthy of your antiquity, worthy of your traditions, and worthy of your education, and at the same time just to your children and to your successors in life."

\* *Letters to Indian Youth on the Evidences of Christianity.* By the Rev. Dr. Murray Bell. 207 pp. 6 As. Post-free, 7 As.

*Elements of Christian Truth.* By the same author. 71 pp. 1½ Annas.

*Short Papers for Seekers after Truth.* 112 pp. 1 Anna. Sold by Mr. A. T. Scott. Has and at other Tract Depôts throughout India.

## APPENDIX.

### THE ARYA SAMAJ.

The great bulk of the Hindus, pandits as well as the common people, in addition to the Vedas properly so called, accept as sacred the Brahmanas, Upanishads, the Laws of Manu, the Itihasas Puranas, &c., and understand them in the sense in which they have been explained in the commentaries for many centuries.

Western science, in different degrees, is spreading in India. Some Hindus get only a glimmering of it through the vernacular or through an imperfect knowledge of English. Such men sometimes attempt to jumble together Hindu and Western ideas. The two, in many respects, absolutely contradictory. Agreement is sought by torturing and twisting the Hindu books, so as to give them an entirely different meaning from the true one. Of men of this class, the late Dayanand Sarasvati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, was a striking example.

A short account will first be given of his life.

Dayanand was born at Morvi, in Kathiawar, in the year 1824. His father was a zealous Saivite. Dayanand, at an early age studied Sanskrit grammar, and learnt the Vedas by heart. Afterwards his father wished to initiate him in the worship of the Linga for which purpose he was to fast a whole night in the temple of Siva. When he was left alone he began to meditate. He says :—

“Is it possible, I asked myself, that this idol I see bestriding his bull before me, and who, according to all accounts, walks about, eats, sleeps, drinks, holds a trident in his hand, beats the drum and can pronounce curses on men, can be the great deity, the Mahadeva, the Supreme Being? Unable to resist such thoughts any longer I roused my father, asking him to tell me whether the hideous idol was the great god of the scriptures. ‘Why do you ask?’ said my father. ‘Because,’ I answered, ‘I feel it impossible to reconcile the idea of an omnipotent living God with this idol which allows the mice to run over his body, and thus suffers himself to be polluted without the slightest protest.’ Then my father tried to explain to me that this stone image of the Mahadeva, having been consecrated by the holy Brahmans, became, in consequence, the god himself, adding that as Siva cannot be perceived personally in this Kali-Yuga, we have the idol in which the Mahadeva is imagined by his votaries.” This explanation, however, was not satisfactory.

When Dayanand was 21 years of age his father wished him to be married against his will; so he left home secretly. Afterwards he was found and brought back, but again he ran away. For years he wandered about, for a time becoming a Sannyasi. Even when 30 years of age he saw the folly of idolatry. When he grew older, he rejected all the Hindu sacred books as inspired except the four Vedas and the Isa Upanishad which is found in the Yajur Veda.\*

In 1881, a large convocation of 300 Pandits from Gauda, Navanagar, and Kasi, was held to discuss with Dayanand his opinions. The following resolutions were carried against him:

(1.) That the Brahmanas are as valid and authoritative as the Smritis, and that other Smritis or law-books are as valid and authoritative as Manu.

(2.) That the worship of Vishnu, Siva, Durga, and other Hindu deities, the performance of the Shraddha ceremonies after death, and bathing in the Ganges, are sanctioned in the Shastras.

(3.) That in the first hymn of the Rig-Veda, addressed to Agni, the primary meaning of Agni is fire, and its secondary meaning is God.

(4.) That sacrifices are performed to secure salvation.

Besides lecturing, Dayanand devoted some of the later years of his life to the publication of books. Before his death he had completed a translation into Hindi of one-half of the Vedas. The principal points of his teaching are embodied in his *Rig-Vedadihashya Bhumika*, 'A Prefatory Exposition of the Rig-Veda and others.' His *Satyarth Prakash*, 'Manifestation of True Meanings,' gives his teaching as to religious and social customs.

Latterly Dayanand became very corpulent. He died at Ajmere in 1883 at the age of 59.†

Dayanand accepted and rejected what he pleased of the Hindu sacred books, and put his own meaning upon them. All who differed from him were denounced as ignorant. All the translations, commentaries, and dictionaries prepared by pandits during the last 2,500 years were wrong; he alone was right. It was his plan to have discussions to have a company of admirers who would join him in loud derisive laughter at his opponents. He tried this when going with pandits at Benares. On the second day of the debate, they gathered together a larger number of men, who hooted and laughed at whatever Dayanand said, so that the tables were turned, and he was completely defeated.

Numerous Societies have been formed in North India and the Punjab, called Arya Samajes, professing to follow Dayanand's interpretation of the Vedas. An Anglo-Vedic College has been established at Lahore, and a weekly newspaper in English, called the *Arya Patrika*, is issued.

\* See his letter to Raja Sivaprasad, *Athenæum*, Feb. 5, 1881.

† Chiefly abridged from *Biographical Essays*, by Max Müller



The following are the principal opinions of Dayanand :—

1. **The Eternity of the Vedas.**—Mr. Forman says :

“The pundits are content with putting the origin of these books back near the beginning of the world when Brahm taught Brahma, and Brahma issued each of the four Vedas out of each of his four months in turn, teaching them to the holy Rishis who wrote them down. Dayanand laughs at all this. He says Brahma was not a god, but only a great Raja and that he could not possibly have been the author of the Vedas for he himself was a student of them. He says the Vedas are eternal absolutely ; that they are the knowledge of God, and hence as eternal as God himself, that they have been given in just their present form this world and to other worlds through all eternity, in their long passages from formation to destruction, each occupying hundreds of billions of year. That the edition for the present world was taught by God to the first four men created 100,960,852,975 years ago. These four men were named Agni, Vayu, Suraj and Angira. They, having learned the Vedas from God, each wrote one of the four books.”\*

Calculations differ as to the exact period of creation. The *Aryan Magazine*, published in 1884 makes the Aryan era 196 crores, 8 lakhs 52,984 years. A writer in the same periodical makes the time yet to pass as 235 crores, 91 lakhs, 47,015 years. Upon this claim to antiquity, the *Indian Spectator* remarks :—

“AGE WITHOUT WISDOM OR PROGRESS.—The Hindu Aryas do not count their existence by centuries but by millions of years. This is their 1,961st million. What a contrast to our miserable 19th century ! But alas and alas ! These millions and billions of years have left the Hindus no wiser than the mushroom Europeans in the Dark Ages. Far better is the 19th century of Europe than the 1,961st millionth year of Aryan India.”

Dayanand argues that the Vedas are eternal from the eternity of sound. “Thus take the word *gau*, a cow : he says the sound *g* has always existed, so also the sound *au* ; the Four (Agni, Vayu, &c.) only combined these, and in writing gave the word *gau*. He further explains that all space, is filled with these sounds ; that when a man speaks he simply chooses whichever of the sounds he wants and taking them in, arranges them in whatever order he wishes, and so forms words and sentences. That as soon as each sound has performed its duty, it separates from those to which it has been temporarily joined and goes again to its own place in space, ready to be used again when wanted.” Dayanand adopted this opinion from the *Purva Mimamsa* of Jaimini. On the above reasoning, every book may be proved to be eternal.

It has been shown that Dayanand's theory of the Vedas being eternal is contradicted by the hymns themselves. Some of the hymns are said to be quite new, others old. The names of the writers are given. It has also been already explained that internal

---

\* *The Arya Samaj*, p. 13.

vidence shows that the hymns were composed when the Aryans were entering India, and had frequent wars with the aborigines.

Raja Siva Prasad, of Benares, asked Dayanand why he regarded the Samhita as inspired and not the Brahmanas. The reply was, Samhita is *per se* (of itself) visible, proved by preception." Dayanand was next asked his reply to, "The disputant says that Brahmanas are *per se* visible, and proved by perception;" to which no answer was given.

Like the rest of Hindus, Dayanand considered the inspiration of the Vedas to be self-evident, and not to require any proof. The *Arya Patrika* says of them: "They are engraved in the starry heavens. They are kneaded into the mould of the earth. They are written in the beams of the sun. They are seen in the light of the moon. They are in the flashes of lightning. In short, they are always with God who fills all in all." (Jan. 16, 1886).

2. **A Belief in One God.**—Dayanand rejected the 33 crores of Hindu gods and goddesses, and claimed the Vedas to be monotheistic. It has been shown that the Vedas teach polytheism. The deities are again and again said to be thrice-eleven in number. They have different names, parents, wives, and children, and live in different places. If they are all one, it might as well be said that 33 persons now living are all one. In later times pantheism was developed. The well known phrase *Ekam evadvityam*, "One only without a second," does not mean that there is no second God, but that there is no second anything.

Monotheism was learned from Christianity.

3. **The Eternity of Souls and Prakriti.**—It has been mentioned that Dayanand mixed up his old ideas as a Hindu with the slight western knowledge he had acquired through the vernaculars. He learned the eternity of souls and his ideas about Prakriti from the *ankhya Darsana* of Kapila, of which they are the chief doctrines. Kapila's system is known among Hindus as the *Nirawara Sankhya*, or the *Sankhya without the Lord*, its founder being accused of atheism.

The *Arya Patrika* reasons thus:—

"If the soul is immortal, how it can be regarded as a created essence what completely passes our comprehension. The assumption of the immortality of the soul necessitates the assumption of its eternity. If the soul is to exist for ever, it must have been existing from time indefinite. In fact whatever exists at the present time has existed always and shall always exist. Not a single particle of what the universe at present contains can be blotted out of existence. Every thing in the universe is eternal and unperishable. The existence of anything at the present time presupposes its existence in the past, and necessitates its existence in the future." Jan. 31, 1888.

The above is a clear statement of the Sankhya doctrine. It

is a fixed Hindu dogma, *navastuno vastusiddhik*, nothing can be produced out of nothing.

The fundamental error of Hinduism is that expressed in the words of the Bible: "Thou thoughtest that I (God) was altogether such an one as thyself." Because a carpenter cannot work without materials, the Almighty God cannot do it. "Ye do err, not knowing the power of God." He does not require, like weak and imperfect man, to stop for materials, but can call them into existence by the mere fiat of His will.

If souls are eternal, we are all little gods. But not only men are such, so is every reptile that crawls on the ground, and every insect that flutters in the air. Souls according to Hinduism, may also pass into plants and even into inanimate objects. Who then can estimate the number of these eternal *svayambhu* essences!

Whether is it more rational to suppose the existence of one Being, infinite in power and wisdom, or to imagine that countless unintelligent atoms and spirits have existed from all eternity?

The reasoning that if the soul is to live for ever, it must have had an eternal pre-existence, is equally unfounded. This is also a denial of God's power. He can give a feature eternal existence to any creature He has called into being.

For further remarks on this point, see *Philosophic Hinduism*, pp. 29-31 and 38, 39.

4. **Transmigration.**—This doctrine is held by the followers of the Arya Samaj, although Max Müller says that the Vedas do not contain a "trace" of it. As one error often requires another to support it, so the false belief in the eternal existence of the soul, required to be accounted for by transmigration.

This dogma is considered in *Popular Hinduism*, (pp. 61—63) Only a few remarks can be made here on the subject.

1. *It is contrary to the course of Nature in which like always produces like.* Every animal and plant produces animals and plants exactly like itself. According to transmigration, a man in his next birth may be a tiger, a pig, a fly, or a pumpkin.

2. *No one has the slightest recollection of any previous birth.* If the soul is eternal, why does it not recollect anything that happened previous to its present life?

3. *By transmigration persons virtually become new beings, so that they are in reality punished for the actions of others.* It is said that at every new birth something takes place by which the remembrance of former things is destroyed. In this case the person on whom it is wrought is no longer the same person. One man is really punished for the faults of another of which he is quite ignorant.

The world is not a place where we are rewarded or punished for actions in imaginary former births; but one where our conduct is tried. We are like the servants of a great King, who has allotted

ous different duties, and according as we discharge them, we shall be dealt with at death.

5. **The Rejection of Sacrifice.**—Dayanand professed the greatest reverence for the Vedas, but his teaching is in direct opposition to their whole tenor. The remark of Mr. Kuntze has been noted: "No matter what hymn is read, it directly or indirectly cannot but refer to a sacrifice." As Dr. Clark says: "In life or in death, sacrifice was the pivot on which the whole religion of the Arya turned. It met him in every phase of life, in every state of being,—it was his all in all."

One great object of sacrifice in the Vedas is the forgiveness of sin. It is repeated again and again that sacrifice is the "annulment of sin." Dayanand looks upon this idea as absurd. Sin cannot be pardoned; its punishment must be endured. He says that the Vedas prescribe things to be burned to make an excellent smoke which purifies the air; also rising, it mixes with and forms clouds and comes down as rain; the rain thus also being purified by its presence. The object and effect of sacrifices, and ordered in the Vedas, is the purifying of air and water, and hence the destroying of disease.

Dayanand, when asked why there is a platform prescribed for sacrifice, an excavation, &c., replies: A platform is ordered to be made round, square, three-cornered, &c., in order that it may be an object-lesson in geometry for the people; a hole is made that it may be lined with brick, and thus the people, in calculating the number of bricks needed for a hole of given dimensions, may have an exercise in arithmetic!

6. **Caste.**—"Caste," says Mr. Forman, "as held by the Hindus, Dayanand repeatedly denounces as the creation of Brahmans and as a great evil. Of *eating from the hands of others*, he says that the Hindu is free to eat from the hand of any, excepting only Christians and Muhammadans—and these are excepted because in the composition of their bodies there are mixed bad-smelling articles! Not only *may* a Hindu eat from the hands of a low-caste man, but men of the higher castes (in his sense of the word) should not cook their own food, but should eat only food cooked by *shudras* or low-caste men. For, says he, working over the fire a cooking, heats the head and thus injures the brain; and the poorer people ought to do this for the higher."

7. **Education of Children.**—After five years of age the sexes are to be kept strictly apart. The teachers and servants in boys' schools are to be only men, and in girls' schools only women. The school is to be at least 8 miles from the nearest village. So long as the children are pupils their parents are not to see them. Nor are there any letters to pass between children and parents.

The subject of study in these schools is to be only and always the Vedas, for in them alone is truth and only truth.

The study of the Vedas should be prosecuted at the very least 24 years—i.e., from 8 until 32 years of age—better until 60, and better still 56 years of age. The benefits to be derived from these courses of study are as follows:—By the first course, studying each of the first two Vedas 12 years, one attains to freedom from disease and a lengthening of life to 70 or 80 years of age; by the second course, giving 12 years to each of the first 3 Vedas and 8 years to the last, the life, members, heart and spirit being joined in strength, one becomes a man who causes all enemies to weep, and who nourishes all good men; by the third course, from 8 to 56 years of age, or “48 years of study as there are 48 letters in the alphabet,” giving 12 years to each of the Vedas, one gets his life in his power.

And now the men and women thus educated may go forth well-fitted for life; let them marry and settle down as householders. When one complies with these conditions, he gains such a hold on life, that he may live on to be 400 years of age. It is rather hard for this theory that Dayanand, who studied the Vedas throughout his life, died at the age of 59.

8. **Marriage.**—Child marriage is denounced. The allowable ages for marriage are for men from 25 to 48, and for women from 16 to 25.

The *Satyarth Prakash*, (pp.80-83) gives the following directions about marriage. The photographs of all pupils in the boys' school who are old enough to be married, are to be sent to and kept by the Principal of the girls' school, and photographs of the marriageable girls to be in possession of the Principal of the boys' school. When either Principal thinks that one of the pupils should be married, let him, or her, choose from among the photos in hand the one, the original of which would seem by appearance best suited for the match. Then let this photograph be sent the Principal of the other school, accompanied by a description of age, height, character, family, property, &c. If both Principals agree that the marriage is desirable, the photograph and description of the young man are presented to the young woman, and the photograph of the young woman is presented to the young man. If all is favourable, the parents are to be notified, and the marriage is to take place. The parents may carry on these negotiations if they wish to do so.

*Second Marriage* is forbidden, but what he calls *Niyog* (rejoined) is allowed. Winowers and widows may live together for a time for the sake of producing children. This compact is to last only until the birth of two children, to be given to whichever of the parents desired to have it for the sake of children. If both parents desire children, the compact is to last until the birth of four—two to be taken by each parent. The compact must then end. Dayanand further declares that should any man or woman break this law, as to the limit of *Niyog*, they are to be cast out from among the Aryas.

*Niyog* is also allowed in certain cases to men and women whose wives and husbands are living.

9. **Ideas of Geography.**—The following is an example: In the *Satyarth Prakash*, "Concerning Travel," Dayanand says the Munis and Rishis and other excellent people used to go to other countries. Viyash Muni and his son Sukhdeo and their disciple went to Pátál, i. e., America (!) and dwelt there. One day, while living in America, Sukhdeo asked his father, Viyash Ji, some question concerning knowledge. Viyash Ji told him to go to Janakpur in Hindustan, and ask the Raja there: We then have an account of the countries Sukhdeo passed through on his journey. Going on and on he arrived at Harivarsh, i. e., *Hari*, a monkey, and Varsh, country,—i. e., the country of monkeys—i. e., the country of people who are like monkeys, or those who have red mouths and light-coloured hair—*Europe*. From Europe he went on to Hundish, the country of the Jews; thence he came into China and thence to India. Dayanand probably knew scarcely enough of geography to be aware that an explanation of Sukhdeo's choosing so circuitous a route in passing from Europe to Hindustan would have been in place.

Again it is related that Krishna went to America in a ship, and called from there Udalak Muni, and brought him to the sacrifice prepared by Raja Yudhistir. At one time Arjuna, an Indian Raja of the same date, went to America and fought with the Raja of America. When the Raja of America was conquered, he gave his daughter, Ulupi by name, to Arjuna!

10. **Modern Inventions supposed to be found in the Vedas**—Max Müller says of Dayanand:—

"To him not only was everything contained in the Vedas perfect truth, but he went a step further, and by the most incredible interpretations succeeded in persuading himself and others that everything worth knowing, even the most recent inventions of modern science, were alluded to in the Vedas. Steam-engines, railways, and steam-boats, all were shown to have been known, at least in their germs, to the poets of the Vedas, for Veda, he argued, means Divine Knowledge, and how could anything have been hid from that?"\*

The following is the mode in which Dayanand finds railways in the Vedas:—

Pandits explain *Shwetam Ashwam* to mean the white horse. "But Dayanand sees more in it; the meaning is the steam horse or steam. *Ashwi* then (meaning here fire and water, and hence steam) we find the motive power for these vehicles. Again, *Karashwa*, i. e., *Shah ghore* (six horses), so the pandits, but Dayanand says, the meaning is, that the vehicles are to contain six compartments for fire and water."†

\* *Biographical Essays*, p. 170.

† Rev. H. Forman, *The Arya Samaj*, pp. 52, 53.

By similar reasoning, balloons, guns, &c., are discovered in the Vedas.

Dayanand's teachings concerning the sciences and the arts are but a crude combination of the ideas he had imbibed from Hinduism with the most primary and incorrect ideas of the sciences and arts introduced by the English.

It has been shown that in Vedic times cows were killed and their flesh eaten. Modern Hindus worship the cow, and accordingly think it very wrong to eat one of their gods. Dayanand thus argues against the use of animal food :

"He calculates that a cow will give on an average 8 or  $8\frac{1}{2}$  maunds of milk in a month, or in a year 99 maunds, in a life time 1,201 maunds, enough with a proper admixture of ghee and sugar to furnish food for a day to 25,740 men. How trivial, in comparison with this, the number that could be fed for a day on that cow's meat. But when you add to this the produce of even the immediate progeny of this cow, how much stronger the comparison and the conclusion from it! Supposing this cow to have 13 calves and allowing for the early death of one, there remain as producers 6 cows and 6 oxen. The milk given by these cows would feed 1,51,40 men, while the grain produced by the labor of the oxen during their life time would feed once, on a ration of 3 paos to a man, an army of 2,56,000 men. Thus as the result of one spared cow, you have food sufficient to satisfy the hunger of 4,10,440 men. He then carries out a similar calculation with regard to goats and sheep."

The absurdity of this reasoning is easily apparent. Dayanand balances the number of men that could be fed for one day on the flesh of a cow, with the number that could be fed by a number of cows and oxen for several years requiring large quantities of land. On the same principle a much larger number could be fed by eating the cow. Suppose the flesh of the cow to be equal in nourishment to 30 seers of wheat, and that each seer that is sown produces 10 seers. The increase by eating the cow and sowing the wheat would be as follows :

Sown	30 seers.
1st Crop	300
2nd "	3,000
3rd "	30,000
4th "	300,000
5th "	3,000,000
6th "	30,000,000
	<hr/>
	3,33,33,300
	"

Allowing one seer a day, 6 crops would yield sufficient grain to feed, not merely four lakhs of men, but upwards of three crores, and all this from eating one cow!

**Dayanand's Criticisms on the Bible.**—If Dayanand twists and tortures the Vedas, giving them quite a different meaning from the

true one, it is not surprising that he should do the same with the Bible. One or two examples may be given.

The Sabbath, or Sunday, was to be kept holy, and it is said God blessed it. Upon this Dayanand remarks, "When he blessed the Sunday, what did He do to Monday and the other days. He must have cursed them. Such is not the conduct of a wise man; how can it be the work of God?"

"Not only are baseless inference drawn from texts, but the passages quoted are sometimes represented as saying something very different from what they do say. In Gen. xxxi. 30, we find Laban asking Jacob, 'Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?' But the verse is so quoted as to make it appear that God is the speaker, and not Laban. Then comes the objection, that the Christian's God also acknowledges gods of stone, or why should he speak of stealing the gods?"\*

The hostility of Dayanand to Christianity is inherited by his followers. There is a class of vulgar, half-educated men in England, called Secularists. They are the same as the Indian Charvakas. They do not believe in God or in any life after this world. They scoff at all religion, but they especially try to caricature Christianity and to attack it with low abuse. The Arya Samajists, in their ignorance, suppose the Secularist tracts against Christianity to be "unanswerable," and have translated some of them into the vernaculars. Their objections have been known for nearly eighteen centuries; but, as a rule, they are misrepresentations of Christianity and without weight. In general they are treated with contempt in Europe. A very wise man long ago said, "A scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not." Sanskrit writers, before entering upon a subject, usually consider who are "competent" to enter upon the study. Vishvanath Bhattacharyya in the *Nyaya Sutra Vritti*, justly says: "They who desire to know the truth are competent for discussion." Unless there is this desire, all discussion is useless.

Although the Arya Samajists are glad to use Secularist attacks upon Christianity, their own belief in God is ridiculed nearly as much as belief in the Bible.

**The Future of the Arya Samaj.**—The Hindus are very open to flattery. Even an ordinary man is often addressed as Maharaj! National vanity is pleased with the thought that their sacred books are eternal, and contain the germs of all knowledge. Dayanand also gave up some of the grosser forms of Hindu superstition. The forecast of Max Müller will doubtless prove correct: "For a time this kind of liberal orthodoxy started by Dayanand may last; but the mere contact with Western thought, and more particularly with Western scholarship, will most likely extinguish it."†

\* Rev. J. Gray, in *Indian Evangelical Review*, for October, 1886. See the paper for many other examples.

† *Biographical Essays*, p. 182.



The Vedas themselves only require to be known to show the absurdity of Dayanand's interpretation of them. His ignorance of geography is simply ridiculous. His want of common sense is shown by his proposed scheme of education. But worst of all is his disgusting doctrine of *niryog*. It alone is sufficient to disprove his claims to be regarded as a true teacher.

The foregoing remarks are chiefly compiled from a pamphlet by the Rev. H. Forman, entitled, "The Arya Samaj, its Teachings and an estimate of it." It is published by the North India Tract Society, Allahabad, price 1 anna.\*

---

\* It may also be obtained from the Tract Depôt, Madras.

THE  
ATHARVA-VEDA

DESCRIBED;

WITH

A Classified Selection of Hymns, Explanatory Notes  
and Review.

---

FIRST EDITION, 3,000 COPIES.

---

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA:  
LONDON AND MADRAS.

---

1897.

## PREFATORY NOTE.



The following Selection of Hymns is taken from the Translation of the Atharva-Veda by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith, formerly Principal of Benares College. The Explanatory Notes are also abridged from the same source. Free permission to use the work was kindly given by the publishers, Messrs. E. J. Lazarus & Co., Benares, for which thanks are warmly returned.

The following works by Mr. Griffith are published by Messrs. Lazarus & Co.

HYMNS OF THE RIG-VEDA, translated with a Popular Commentary, 2 vols., 8vo. cloth bound, gilt lettered, Price Rs. 14.

HYMNS OF THE SAMA VEDA, as above. One volume, cloth bound, gilt lettered, Rs. 4. In stiff paper cover, Rs. 3½.

HYMNS OF THE ATHARVA-VEDA, as above. Two vols. cloth, gilt lettered, Rs. 12. Stiff paper cover, Rs. 10½.

METRICAL TRANSLATION OF VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA, complete in one volume, 8vo. cloth, gilt lettered. Price Rs. 6.

Numerous other works in Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, and English have been published by Messrs. Lazarus & Co., Catalogue supplied on application.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION, THE THREE VEDAS ... ..	1
THE ATHARVA-VEDA ... ..	4
SUMMARY OF THE BOOKS ... ..	10
CLASSIFIED SELECTION OF HYMNS ... ..	13
CHARMS TO CURE DISEASE ... ..	14
CHARMS WITH AMULETS ... ..	21
CHARMS AGAINST DEMONS ... ..	25
CHARMS CONNECTED WITH HOME LIFE ... ..	26
MISCELLANEOUS HYMNS ... ..	36
THE GODS OF THE ATHARVA-VEDA ... ..	45
PRAYERS FOR THE PARDON OF SIN ... ..	56
REFERENCES TO A FUTURE STATE ... ..	59
REVIEW... ..	60
THE ATHARVA-VEDA NOT A DIVINE REVELATION ... ..	63
THE TRUE VEDA ... ..	66
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS ... ..	69



# THE ATHARVA-VEDA.

## INTRODUCTION.

Before noticing the ATHARVA-VEDA, the fourth Veda, a brief account may be given of the three Vedas by which it is preceded.

**Meaning of Term.**—VEDA is from the Sanskrit *vid*, 'know,' kindred with the Latin *vid*, and the English *to wit*. In its general sense it is sometimes applied by the Brahmans to the whole body of their most ancient sacred literature. More strictly, it denotes four collections of hymns, which are respectively known by the names of Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, and Atharva-Veda. They are supposed to contain the science, as teaching that knowledge which, of all others, is best worth acquiring.

"The general form of the Vedas is that of lyric poetry. They contain the songs in which the first ancestors of the Hindu people, at the very dawn of their existence as a separate nation, while they were still only on the threshold of the great country which they were afterwards to fill with their civilization, praised the gods, extolled heroic deeds, and sung of other matters which kindled their poetical fervour."\*

**The Vedas the highest Hindu Authorities.**—The Hindu sacred books are divided into two great classes, called *Śruti* and *Smṛiti*. *Śruti*, which means hearing, denotes direct revelation; *Smṛiti*, recollection, includes the sacred books which are admitted to have been composed by human authors.

Professor Max Müller thus shows the estimation in which the Vedas are held :

"According to the orthodox views of Indian theologians, not a single line of the Veda was the work of human authors. The whole Veda is in some way or other the work of the Deity, and even those who received the revelation, or, as they express it, those who saw it, were not supposed to be ordinary mortals, but beings raised above the level of common humanity, and less liable therefore to error in the reception of revealed truth. .... The human element, called *pauruṣheyatva* in Sanskrit, is drawn out of every corner or hiding-place, and as the Veda is held to have existed in the mind of the Deity before the beginning of time, every allusion to historical events, of which there are not a few, is explained away with a zeal and ingenuity worthy of a better cause."

"The laws of Manu, according to the Brahmanic theology, are not revelation; they are not *Śruti*, but only *Smṛiti*. If these laws or any

---

\* Whitney's *Oriental and Linguistic Studies*, Vol. I., p. 5.

other work of authority can be proved on any point to be at variance with a single passage of the Veda, their authority is at once overruled.\*

The inspiration of the Veda, says Monier Williams, is regarded as so self-convincing, "as to require no proof, and to be entirely beyond the province of reason or argument."

According to Jaimini, the Vedas are *eternal*, because *sound is eternal*!

Dr. John Muir, in the Third Volume of his *Sanskrit Texts*, gives fourteen conflicting accounts of the origin of the Vedas, drawn from the authors themselves and from later Hindu writers. But as Max Müller remarks, "That one statement should be contradicted by another, seems never to have been felt as a serious difficulty"† by Hindus. Swami Vivekananda, at Chicago, "accepted all religions to be true"‡—theism and atheism, monotheism and polytheism.

**RIG-VEDA.**—The name means the Veda of hymns of praise. *Rich*, which before the initial soft letter of Veda, is changed into *Rig*, is derived from a root which in Sanskrit means to celebrate. When standing by itself, *rich* becomes *rik*.

The hymns are called *Mantras* or *Suktas* (praises). The entire number form the *Sanhita* (or *Samhita*) collection. They are arranged in two methods. One divides them amongst eight *Kāndas* (portions), or *Astakas* (eighths), each of which is again subdivided into eight *Adhyayas*, lectures. The other plan classes the *Suktas* under ten *Mandalas*, circles, subdivided into rather more than a hundred *Anuvakas*, or sub-sections. A further subdivision of the *Suktas* into *Vargas*, or paragraphs of about five stanzas each, is common to both classifications.§

As early as about 600 B.C. every verse, every word, every syllable had been carefully counted. The number of verses varies from 10,402 to 10,622; that of the *padas* or words, is 153,826; that of the syllables, 432,000.

The ten books form separate collections, each belonging to one of the ancient families of India.

The priests who specially recited the verses of the Rig-Veda were called *Hotris*.

An English translation of the Rig-Veda, based on the commentary of Sayana, was prepared by the late Professor Wilson. Part of it was published after his death. It is expensive, the price of the 6 volumes being £6-19s.

\* *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I.

† *Ancient Sanskrit Literature* p. 321. Kapila was an exception. He says in his *Sāṅkhya Aphorisms*, Book I. "There is no acceptance of the inconsistent, else we come to the level of children, madmen and the like."

‡ *Report of Parliament of Religions*, p. 102.

§ Professor Wilson's Introduction, p. xiv.

The *Sacred Books of the East* contain two volumes of translations of *Vedic Hymns*, by Max Müller and Oldenberg, prices 18s. 6d. and 14s. There is a complete translation of the whole book, with valuable explanatory notes, by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith, formerly Principal of Benares College; in two volumes, price Rs. 14, published by E. J. Lazarus and Co., Benares. With the kind permission of Mr. Griffith, some of the most important hymns from his translation are quoted in full in the work noted below.\*

**YAJUR-VEDA.**—The name comes from *Yaj*, sacrifice. It contains the formulas and verses to be muttered by the priests and their assistants who had chiefly to prepare the sacrificial ground, to dress the altar, slay the victims, and pour out the libations.

The Black and White Yajus differ in their arrangement. In the former the sacrificial formulas are for the most part immediately followed by their explanation; in the latter they are entirely separated from one another.

A large portion of the materials of the Yajur-Veda is derived from the Rig-Veda, to about the half of which it is equal in both forms united. But it contains prose passages which are new.

As the manual of the priesthood, it became the great subject of study, and it has a great number of different Sakhas or Schools. The priests who used it were called *Adhvaryus*, offerers.

The text of both divisions has been printed either in India or in the West; but no English translation has yet been published.

**SAMA-VEDA.**—This is wholly metrical. It contains 1549 verses, only 78 of which have not been traced to the Rig-Veda. The verses have been selected and arranged for the purpose of being chanted at the sacrifices of which the intoxicating juice of the Soma plant was the chief ingredient. Many of the invocations are addressed to Soma, some to Agni, and some to Indra. There are special song books directing the manner in which they are to be intoned. The priests who recited the Sama-Veda were called *Udgatris*, chanters.

The text has been printed and there is an English translation by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith, published by Lazarus & Co., Benares. Price Rs. 4 cloth; Rs. 3½ paper cover.

**ATHARVA-VEDA.**—This Veda is of later origin than the others. Manu speaks of only the Three Vedas. One-sixth of the work is in prose, and about one-sixth of the hymns is found in the Rig-Veda. A full account of it is given in the following pages.

So far as subject-matter is concerned, there may be said to be only two Vedas—The Rig and Atharva Vedas. The other two consist almost entirely of selections from the Rig-Veda, differently arranged for sacrificial purposes.

\* *An Account of the Vedas, with Illustrative Extracts.* 8vo. 168 pp. 4½ As. Post-free, 6 As.



## THE ATHARVA-VEDA.

**Title.**—Griffith gives the following explanation of the name :

“The Atharva-Veda is a comparatively late addition to the three ancient Vedas, the Rig, Yajus and Saman—the Vedas respectively of recited praise, sacrifice, and song or chanted hymn—which formed the foundation of the early religious belief and worship of the Hindus. Unlike these three Vedas, the Atharva-Veda derives the name by which it is generally known, not from the nature of its contents but from a person of indefinitely remote antiquity, named Atharvan, who is spoken of in the Rig-Veda as the first priest who ‘rubbed Agni forth’ or produced fire by attrition, who ‘first by sacrifices made the paths’ or established ways of communication between men and Gods, and overcame hostile demons by means of the miraculous powers which he had received from heaven. To the descendants of this Atharvan, associated with the Angirases and the Bhrigus, members of other ancient priestly families often mentioned in the Rig-Veda, the collected hymns—called also the Atharvāngirasas and the Bhrigvangirasas, that is the Songs of the Atharvans and Angirases and the Songs of the Bhrigus and Angirases, and in the Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa, the Atharvana-Veda and the Angirasa-Veda—were, it is said, originally revealed.—*Preface*.

Bloomfield, in the learned and elaborate Introduction to his translation, thus distinguishes between *Atharvan* and *Angiras* :

“The term Atharvan refers to the auspicious practices of the Veda, recognised as holy and ‘conferring prosperity’; the term Angiras refers to the hostile sorcery practices of the Veda.”\*

It would seem, however, that this distinction was, at a later period, abandoned. Bloomfield says :

“In the end the name Atharvan and its derivatives prevail as designations of the practices and charms of the fourth Veda without reference to their strongly diversified character.”†

Another name of the collection is *Brahma-Veda*, which is variously explained. Griffith considers it so called “as the Knowledge of Prayers (*brahmāṇi*), including benediction, imprecation, spells and charms—the Veda which teaches to appease the gods and secure their protecting favour, to bless friends, and to curse and destroy human and ghostly enemies, and all noxious creatures. It is the Veda of Prayers, Charms and Spells.”‡

**Age.**—Griffith gives his own opinion and those of some eminent scholars on this point :

“I have called the Atharva-Veda a comparatively late addition to the three ancient Vedas, of which, it may be observed, one only, the Rig-Veda, is original and historical, the other two being merely liturgical compilations. The Atharva is like the Rik, in the main historical and

\* Page xviii. Abridged.

† Ibid p. xxiv.

‡ *Preface*, pp. i, ii. Abridged.

original, but its contents cannot, as a whole, lay claim to equal antiquity."

Professor Whitney says :

"The greater portion of the hymns are plainly shown, both by their language and internal character, to be of much later date than the general contents of the other historic Veda, and even than its tenth book with which they stand nearly connected in import and origin. . . . This, however, would not imply that the main body of the Atharva hymns were not already in existence when the compilation of the Rik took place. Their character would be ground enough for their rejection and exclusion from the canon until other hands were found to undertake their separate gathering into an independent collection."

Professor Weber also observes :

"The origin of the Atharva Samhitá dates from the period when Brahmanism had become dominant. It is in other respects perfectly analogous to the Rik-Samhitá, and contains the store of song of this Brahmanical epoch. Many of these songs are to be found also in the last, that is the least ancient book of the Rik-Samhitá. In the latter they are the latest additions made at the time of its compilation. In the Atharvan they are the proper and natural utterance of the present. The spirit of the two collections is indeed widely different. In the Rik there breathes a lively natural feeling, a warm love for nature ; while in the Atharvan there prevails, on the contrary, only an anxious dread of her evil spirits and their magical powers. In the Rik we find the people in a state of free activity and independence ; in the Atharvan we see it bound in the fetters of the hierarchy and superstition. But the Atharvâ-Veda likewise contains pieces of great antiquity, which may perhaps have belonged more to the people proper, to its lower grades ; whereas the songs of the Rik appear rather to have been the property of the higher families. It was not without a long struggle that the songs of the Atharvan were permitted to take their place as a fourth Veda. There is no mention made of them in the more ancient portions of the Bráhmaṇas of the Rik, Sáman, and Yajus."

Still, as Professor Max Müller says :

"The songs known under the name of the Atharvángirasas formed probably an additional part of the sacrifice from a very early time. They were chiefly intended to counteract the influence of any untoward event that might happen during the sacrifice. They also contained imprecations and blessings, and various formulas such as popular superstition would be sure to sanction at all times and in all countries. If once sanctioned, however, these magic verses would grow in importance, nay, the knowledge of the other Vedas would necessarily become useless without the power of remedying accidents, such as could hardly be avoided in so complicated a ceremonial as that of the Brahmans. As that power was believed to reside in the songs of the Atharvángirasas, a knowledge of these songs became necessarily an essential part of the theological knowledge of Ancient India."\*

---

\* Preface, pp. iv—vii.

**Contrast between the Rig-Veda and the Atharva-Veda.**

This is strongly set forth by Madame Ragozin, who attributes to the latter largely a non-Aryan origin :

"Nothing could well be imagined more different in contents and more opposite in spirit than these two *samhitās*. That of the Atharvan contains a comparatively small number of mantras from the Rig, and those only from the portions unanimously recognised as the latest, while the bulk of the collection along with some original hymns of the same kind and, in many cases, of great poetic beauty, consists chiefly of incantations, spells, exorcisms. We have here, as though in opposition to the bright, cheerful pantheon of beneficent deities, so trustingly and gratefully addressed by the Rishis of the Rig, a weird repulsive world of darkly scowling demons, inspiring abject fear, such as never sprang from Aryan fancy. We find ourselves in the midst of a goblin-worship, the exact counterpart of that with which we became familiar in Turanian Chaldea. Every evil thing in nature, from a drought to a fever or bad qualities of the human heart, is personified and made the object of terror-stricken propitiation, or of attempts at circumvention through witchcraft, or the instrument of harm to others through the same compelling force. Here and there, worship takes the form of conjuring, not prayer; its ministers are sorcerers, not priests. The conclusion almost forces itself on us, that this collection represents the religion of the native races, who, through a compromise dictated by a policy after a long period of struggle, ending in submission, obtained for it partial recognition from the conquering and every way superior race. It is easy to see how the latter, while condescending to incorporate the long abhorred ritual into their own canonical books, probably at first in some subordinate capacity, would, so to speak, sanctify or purify it, by supplementing it with some new hymns of their own, addressed to the same deities as those of the Rig and breathing the same spirit. If, as is more than probable, this is the history of the fourth Veda, the manner of its creation justifies the seemingly paradoxical assertion that it is at once the most modern of the four, and, in portions more ancient than even the oldest parts of the Rig-Veda. As a *samhitā*, it is a manifestly late production, since it bears evidence of having been in use in the valleys of the Gangā and the Yamunā; but the portions which embody an originally non-Aryan religion are evidently anterior to Aryan occupation."

**Double Aspect of the Atharva-Veda.**—The following remarks on this point are abridged from Bloomfield :

"Many of the hymns and practices are benevolent and are in general well regarded, though even these do not altogether escape the blight of contempt. The class of charms designed to establish harmony in family and village life and reconciliation of enemies, are obviously auspicious in their nature. Even the sorceries of the Atharvan necessarily show a double face; they are useful to oneself, harmful to others. This conflict of emotions lasts throughout the history of the recorded Hindu

thought; the colour of the Atharvan remains changeable to the end, and is so described in the final orthodox and stereotyped view that it is used 'to appease, to bless, and to curse.' The fact, however, is that there must have arisen in the long run a strong wave of popular aversion against the Veda whose most salient teaching is sorcery. This appears from the discussions of the Hindus themselves as to the orthodoxy of that Veda; from the conscious efforts of the later Atharvan writings to vindicate its character and value; from the allegorical presentation of the Atharvan as 'a lean black man, sharp, irascible and amorous; and many occasional statements of the Vedic and classical texts.' \*

"Witchcraft blows hot and cold from the same mouth; according as it is turned towards the inimical forces, human and demoniac, or is turned by others against oneself, it is regarded as useful or noxious. Hymn II. 7, ensures protection against curses and hostile plots, but does not prevent the existence of fierce imprecations and curses issued forth subjectively for the ruin of another. It is a question throughout of my sorcery, or thy sorcery. †"

**The Atharva-Veda in Hindu Literature.**—Bloomfield, in his Introduction, devotes about thirty pages to this point, giving numerous references. Only a few books can be noticed.

Max Müller says in *Ancient Sanskrit Literature* :

"Because a knowledge of the songs of the Atharvāṅgiras was most important to the Brahman or Purohita, these songs themselves, when once admitted to the rank of a Veda, were called the Veda of the Brahman, or the Brahma-Veda."

The Rev. Dr. K. S. Macdonald, after quoting the above, adds :

"In the Gopatha Brāhmaṇa they are repeatedly represented as the proper Veda for the Brahman. Thus we read (iii. i.) : 'Let a man elect a Hotri, who knows the Rich, an Adhvaryu who knows the Yajush, an Udgatri who knows the Sāman, a Brahman who knows the Atharvāṅgiras.' ‡"

Manu thus advises the Brahman :

"Let him use without hesitation the sacred texts revealed by Atharvan and by Angiras; speech, indeed, is the weapon of the Brahman, with it he may slay his enemies." XI. 33.

In the Mahābhārata its importance as a Veda, and its canonicity, are finally and completely established; its practices are familiarly known, and, in general, not subjected to any peculiar criticism. §

"The Purāṇas always speak of the fourfold Veda." ||

**Versification.**—In the Preface to his translation, Griffith says :

"The prevailing metres of the original hymns are Gāyatrī, Anuṣṭup, Pankti, Trisṭup, and Jagatī, consisting the first three of three, four, and five octosyllabic Pādas or divisions, and the last two of four undecasyllabic and dodecasyllabic Pādas respectively. In translating

\* Introduction, p. xxix.

† Ibid, p. xxxix.

‡ Indian Evangelical Review, July, 1897 p. 55.

§ Bloomfield's Introduction, p. li. || Ibid, p. lv.

the first set I have employed corresponding numbers of the common octosyllabic or dimeter iambic line, and in the second of the ordinary hypercatalectic blank verse line and the Alexandrine." *Preface*, p. xvii.

A fuller account of the metres employed in the Vedas will be found in the Introduction to the *Account of the Vedas*.

"Parts of the Atharva-Veda, for instance Book XV. and the greater portion of XVI., are entirely in prose, and hymns, verses, and parts of verses in prose are found in other Books also. "It is not possible," as Professor Whitney observes, 'to draw everywhere a sharp line between metrical and non-metrical matter; prose and loose verse slide into one another sometimes in a perplexing manner, or are mixed up in the same stanza.'"

**Divisions.**—Griffith gives the following general view:

"The Atharva-Veda Sanhitā or Collection is divided into twenty *Kāndas*, Books or Sections, containing some 760 hymns and about 6,000 verses. In Books I.—VII. the hymns or pieces are arranged according to the number of their verses, without any reference to their subjects or the nature of their contents. The hymns of Book I. contain on an average four verses each; those of Book II. five; those of III. six; those of IV. seven; those of V. from eight to eighteen; those of VI. three; those of VII. many single verses and upwards to eleven. Books VIII.—XX contain longer pieces, some of which extend to 50, 60, 70, and even 80 verses. In Books I.—XIII. the contents are of the most heterogeneous description, with no attempt at any kind of systematic arrangement of subjects. They consist principally of prayers, formulas and charms for protection against evil spirits of all sorts and kinds, against sorcerers and sorceresses, diseases, snakes, and other noxious creatures, of benedictions and imprecations, invocations of magical herbs, prayers for children and long life, for general and special protection and prosperity, success in love, trade and gambling, together with formulae to be employed in all kinds of domestic occurrences. In Books XIV.—XVIII. the subjects are systematically arranged; XIV. treating of marriage ceremonies; XV. of the glorification of the *Vrátya* or religious wandering mendicant; XVI. and XVII. of certain conjurations; XVIII. of funeral rites and the offering of obsequial cakes to the Manes or spirits of departed ancestors. Book XIX. contains a somewhat miscellaneous collection of supplementary hymns. Book XX. consists—with the exception of what is called the *Kuntāpa* Section, comprising hymns 127—136—of pieces addressed to Indra and taken entirely from the *Rig-Veda*. These two Books, which are not noticed in the *Atharva-Veda Prātisākhya*—a grammatical treatise on the phonetic changes of words in the text—are manifestly a later addition to the collection. Many of the Atharva hymns reappear in the *Rig-Veda*, about one-seventh of the collection, sometimes unchanged and sometimes with important variations, being found in the older compilation. Interspersed in several of the Books are pieces of varying length, consisting of curious cosmological and mystico-theological speculations which are not without interest as containing the germs of religious and philosophical doctrines."

afterwards fully developed in the Bráhmaṇas and Upanishads." *Preface*, pp. VII, VIII.

**General Character.**—Griffith gives the following summary:—

"In this strange collection of heterogenous material there is much that is obscure, much that is unintelligible, much that is intolerably tedious, and not a little that is offensive and disgusting to European taste. Yet the spiritual portions of the work have sometimes a strange beauty and grandeur of their own which attracts and fascinates the orthodox Hindu, while the occasional glimpses of light which it throws upon the daily life, the toils and pleasures, the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows of the average man invests it, I think, for the European reader with greater and more human interest than is possessed by the more ancient Veda." *Preface*, pp. VIII, IX.

Griffith next skilfully groups the hymns together so as to give a vivid picture of life in all its aspects in the times of the Atharva-Veda. This is quoted under another head.

**Text.**—Griffith says:

"The text of the Atharva-Veda, with some amendments of the numerous and obvious false readings of the manuscripts, and some attempts to bring sense out of the utter nonsense which constitutes part of the last two books,' was published at Berlin, in 1856, by Professors Rudolf von Roth and W. D. Whitney." *Preface*, p. XIII.

**English Translations.**—Some entire hymns and many fragments are given in Muir's *Original Sanskrit Texts*. The first complete English translation published is by Mr. R. T. H. Griffith, noticed in the Preface, from which the following extracts are taken. There are also numerous useful notes, forming a commentary on the hymns. In two volumes, price Rs. 12 cloth, Rs. 10½ paper covers.

The *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda*, translated by Professor Maurice Bloomfield, John Hopkins University, United States, has recently been added to the *Sacred Books of the East*. The author says:

"The present volume of translations comprises about one-third of the entire material of the Atharva-Veda. But it represents the contents and spirit of the fourth Veda in a far greater measure than is indicated by this numerical statement." p. lxxi.

Passages that occur in the Rig-Veda, books in prose, and hymns of less interest, have been omitted.

"Of the rest of the Atharvan, (Books I-XIII) there is presented here about one-half, naturally that half which seemed to the translator the most interesting and characteristic." p. lxxii.

The hymns in Bloomfield's translation are classified according to subject-matter. Griffith gives the whole in the original order.

Each plan has its advantages. With a limited number of hymns perhaps the former is preferable.

Bloomfield's translation is followed by a learned commentary. It is published by the Clarendon Press, Price 21s.

### SUMMARY OF THE BOOKS.

A short general view of the Books is given in the Introduction. The following account enters more into detail.

#### BOOK I.

This Book contains 35 Hymns, each averaging 4 verses. The subjects are very miscellaneous, and there is no arrangement.

The first hymn, quoted below, introductory to the whole Book, is a prayer addressed to Váchaspati for divine help, favour, and illumination. Váchaspati, Lord of Speech, is the God or Genius of human life which lasts as long as the power of speech remains in the body. Vāsoshpati, Lord of Treasure, that is of wealth and food, is not mentioned elsewhere in the Veda. (Griffith.)

1. Now may Váchaspati assign to me the strength and powers of  
Those  
Who, wearing every shape and form, the triple seven, are  
wandering round.
2. Come thou again, Váchaspati, come with divine intelligence.  
Vasoshpati, repose thou here. In me be Knowledge, yea, in me.
3. Here, even here, spread sheltering arms like the two bow-ends  
strained with cord.  
This let Váchaspati confirm. In me be knowledge, yea, in me.
4. Váchaspati hath been invoked : may he invite us in reply.  
May we adhere to Sacred Lore. Never may I be reft thereof.

NOTES.—*Those*: the gods in general, or the Maruts. *The triple seven*: an indefinite number.

#### BOOK II.

This Book contains 36 Hymns of a miscellaneous character averaging 5 verses in length.

#### BOOK III.

This Book contains 31 Hymns of the same character as the preceding, but averaging 6 verses each. Hymn 16 is the morning prayer of the great Rishi, Vasishta, taken, with slight variation from Rig-Veda VII. 41. The chief petitions are, "give us wealth," "may we be rich in men and heroes."

#### BOOK IV.

In this Book 40 Hymns, averaging 7 verses, are included. Hymn 2, an address to the Unknown God, is from Rig-Veda I. 121. There are other Hymns from the same Veda.

## Book V.

This Book contains 31 Hymns, averaging 12 verses. One is a curious dialogue between Atharva and Varuna about the possession of a wonderful cow. Another is about the abduction of a Brahman's wife. Two Hymns are on the wickedness and ruinous consequences of oppressing Brahmans. Two are addressed to the War Drum to secure success in battle.

## Book VI.

Of the 142 Hymns in this Book most contain only 3 verses. They consist of prayers and charms.

## Book VII.

This Book contains 118 Hymns, nearly one-half of which consist of only a single verse. The contents are like the foregoing.

## Book VIII.

This Book contains only 10 Hymns, but they average 26 verses in length. They consist chiefly of imprecations or charms for the restoration of health. Hymn 4, against evil spirits, is taken from Rig-Veda VII. 104.

## Book IX.

This Book contains 10 Hymns; one of which is entirely in prose, while a second has only two stanzas in verse out of 62. The longest is "a glorification of the hospitable reception of guests, regarded as identical with sacrifice offered to the gods." Hymns 7 and 10, consisting of enigmatical questions, are taken, with variations, from Rig-Veda I. 164.

## Book X.

This Book contains 10 Hymns, averaging 35 verses. One is a glorification of the Supreme Deity, under the name of Skambha, considered the Pillar or Support of all existence. Another is in praise of the Sacred Cow.

## Book XI.

This Book contains 10 Hymns, averaging 31 verses, Hymn 3, which is all in prose except 4 lines, is in praise of the offering of rice boiled in milk. Hymn 8 treats of the origin of several gods and the creation of man. The last two Hymns are incantations for the destruction of enemies.



## BOOK XII.

This Book contains only 5 Hymns, but they average 60 verses. The second is a funeral hymn, taken partly from Rig-Veda X. 18. Hymns 4 & 5, the latter partly in prose, show the sin and danger of robbing a Brahman of his cow.

## BOOK XIII.

This Book contains 4 Hymns, averaging 47 verses. "It is almost entirely devoted to the glorification of Rohita, the Red, a form of Fire and of the Sun, but distinguished from both these deities."

## BOOK XIV.

This Book contains only 2 Hymns, including 139 verses. It treats of nuptial ceremonies and formulas. The greater part of Hymn 1 is taken, with many changes, from Rig-Veda X. 85; Hymn 2 is also partly taken from the same hymn.

## BOOK XV.

This Book contains 18 Hymns, averaging about 10 stanzas. They are all in prose and very obscure. The aim seems to be the glorification of the Vrátya, or wandering Nonconformist.

## BOOK XVI.

This Book contains 9 Hymns, averaging 10 verses. Some of them are entirely in prose; others partly in prose and partly in poetry. "The Book consists almost entirely of charms and conjurations for various purposes."

## BOOK XVII.

This Book contains only one Hymn, including 30 verses. It is a prayer to Indra, identified with Vishnu and the Sun, for the love of gods, men, and beasts, general protection and prosperity, with all earthly and heavenly blessings."

## BOOK XVIII.

This Book contains 4 Hymns, averaging 70 verses. "The subjects are funeral rites and sacrificial offerings to the Fathers, the manes or spirits of the dead." The Hymns are composed wholly or in part from verses in the Rig-Veda. The first Hymn begins with a dialogue between Yama and Yami.

## BOOK XIX.

This Book contains 72 Hymns, averaging about 8 verses. Both it and the following are later additions to the original collection. The MSS. contain numerous misreadings which in some

parts make utter nonsense. The Hymns are chiefly prayers and charms for protection and prosperity. Hymn 6, on the mystical sacrifice of Purusha, is taken, with variations, from Rig-Veda X. 90. Hymn 13, a prayer for victory in battle, is taken from Rig-Veda X. 103. Some Hymns are non-metrical. Hymn 21 gives in a single line the names of the chief Vedic Metres :

Gáyatrí, Ushnih, Anushtup, Brihatí, Trishtup, Jagati.

Hymn 23, all in prose except one verse, is an address of homage to various portions of the Atharva-Veda, classed according to the number of verses which their hymns contain.

1 Hail to the four verse strophes of the Atharvanas ! 2 Hail to the five versed ! 3 Hail to the six-versed, &c.

30 Collected manly powers are topped by Brahma.

Brahma at first spread out the loftiest heaven.

Brahmá was born first of all things existing.

Who then is fit to be this Brahmá's rival ?

### Book XX.

This Book contains 143 Hymns of various lengths, but averaging about 8 verses. With the exception of the Kuntápa section (127-136) the Hymns are addressed almost exclusively to Indra, and generally taken directly from hymns and portions of hymns of the Rig-Veda.

Kuntápa is said to be the name of 20 organs or glands, supposed to be situated in the belly. The section is a strange collection of incantations riddles, &c., without any religious character. With some of them the gods bewildered the Asuras by their recitation, and so defeated them.

## CLASSIFIED SELECTION OF HYMNS. .

Belief in WITCHCRAFT and the power of CHARMS forms distinguishing features of the Atharva-Veda. Bloomfield says in his Introduction :

"Sorcery and house practices there were in India at all times (p. xxx). Witchcraft is blended with every sphere of religious thought and activity (p. xxxix). Even Witchcraft is part of the religion ; it has penetrated and has become intimately blended with the holiest Vedic rites." (xlv.)

Among the aboriginal tribes of India all diseases in men and animals are attributed to one of two causes—the anger of some evil spirit who has to be appeased or to the spell of some witch or sorcerer, who should be destroyed or driven out of the land. In the latter case, a witchfinder is employed to divine who has cast the spell, and various modes of divination are resorted to. In former

times the person denounced and all his family were put to death in the belief that, witches breed witches. We have changed all that. "The witch now," says Sir Alfred Lyall, "lives under laws which, instead of condemning him, interfere actively to protect him from molestation, and are much more prone to hang witch-finders than witches. . . . It is probable that in no other time or country is witchcraft ever been so comfortably practised as it is now in India under British rule."\* He says that "the belief in witchcraft still pervades all classes (in India), from highest to lowest (though of course the pressure of the superstition is far lighter upon the uppermost layers of society)."<sup>†</sup>

In the charms plants are frequently employed. They do not exert a medicinal influence; but, from illusory analogies, are supposed to have peculiar powers. A creeping plant which binds itself to a tree is supposed to be able to cure broken bones; another which has strong deep roots must be able to make the hair grow.

Charms are of two kinds—to preserve from harm or to cause harm. Illustrative examples will now be given.

### 1. CHARMS TO CURE DISEASE.

The householder and his family are exposed to malarial fevers and other diseases to which flesh is heir. A large number of hymns have reference to their cure. Even baldness has three hymns. For ready reference, the principal charms are arranged alphabetically.

#### **Bloodletting.**—Book I. 17.

- 1 Those maidens there, the veins who run their course in robes of ruddy hue,  
Must now stand quiet, reft of power, like sisters who are brotherless.
- 2 Stay still, thou upper vein, stay still, thou lower, stay, thou midmost one.  
The smallest one of all stands still : let the great vessel e'en be still.
- 4 A mighty rampart<sup>‡</sup> built of sand hath circled and encompassed you :  
Be still, and quietly take rest.

**Broken Bone.**—IV. 12. An address to the plant Arundhati, a climbing plant, to bind the injured limb as it binds the tree round which it grows :

- 1 Thou art the healer, making whole, the healer of the broken bone :  
Make thou this whole, Arundhati !
- 2 Whatever bone of thine within thy body hath been wrenched or cracked,  
May Dhatar<sup>§</sup> set it properly, and join together limb by limb.

\* *Asiatic Studies*, p. 96.

† *Ibid.*, p. 75.

‡ Probably a bandage filled with wet sand to compress and cool the vein.

§ The god who ordains, fixes, and preserves.

- 5 Join thou together hair with hair, join thou together skin with skin.

Let blood and bone grow strong in thee. Unite the broken part,  
O Plant.

**Consumption.**—VI. 14. There are frequent references to this disease, which is still prevalent. It is fostered among women by their being often shut up in close rooms without a sufficient supply of pure air. Hymn II. 33 is enlarged with variations from Rig-Veda X. 163. The hymn quoted below is a charm addressed to some medicinal plant.

- 1 Remove thou all Decline that lurks within the members and the joints.

The firmly-settled heart-disease that racks the bones and rends the limbs.

- 2 From the consumptive man I pluck Decline as 'twere a creeping thing.

I cut the bond that fetters him, even as a root of cucumber.

- 3 Begone, Consumption, hence away, like a young foal that runs at speed.

Then, not pernicious to our men, flee, yearly visitant like grass!

**Cough.**—VI. 105.

- 1 Rapidly as the fancy flies forth with conceptions of the mind,  
So following the fancy's flight, O Cough, flee rapidly away.

- 2 Rapidly as an arrow flies away with keenly-sharpened point,  
So swiftly flee away, O Cough, over the region of the earth!

- 3 Rapidly as the beams of light, the rays of Súra, fly away,  
So, Cough! fly rapidly away over the current of the sea!

**Dysentery.**—I. 2. An arrow and munja grass are employed.

- 1 We know the father of the shaft, Parjanya, liberal nourisher,  
Know well his mother Prithivi, Earth with her manifold designs.

2. Do thou, O Bowstring, bend thyself around us; make my body  
stone (=strong).

Firm in thy strength drive far away malignities and hateful things.

- 3 When, closely clinging round the wood (the bow) the bowstring  
sings triumph to the swift and whizzing arrow, Indra, ward off  
from us the shaft, the missile:

- 4 As in its flight the arrow's point hangs between earth and  
firmament,

So stand this Munja grass between ailment and dysenteric ill!

The succeeding hymns treat of reverse diseases—constipation and suppression of urine. As an arrow from a bow flies through the air, so the channels are to flow.

**Fever, Charms against.**—Susruta calls fever the king of diseases. It causes more deaths in India than all other diseases

taken together. There are several charms for its cure. In Hymn I. 25, quoted below, it is said to be more frequent at the beginning of the rains when Agni descends, in the form of lightning, from the water clouds. Bilious fever causes the yellow colour. Other forms of the disease are mentioned. Fever is addressed as a god, the son of King Varuna, sent to punish sin. Yielding to prayer, he is asked to depart.

- 1 When Agni blazed when he had pierced the Waters,  
whereat the Law observers paid him homage,  
There, men assever, was the loftiest birthplace :  
O Fever, yielding to our prayer avoid us.
- 2 If thou be fiery glow, or inflammation, or if thy birthplace call  
for chips of fuel,  
Rack is thy name, God of the sickly yellow !  
O Fever, yielding to our prayer avoid us.
- 3 Be thou distress, or agonizing torment, be thou the son King  
Varuna hath begotten,  
Rack is thy name, God of the sickly yellow !  
O Fever yielding to our prayer avoid us,
- 4 I offer homage to the chilly Fever, to his fierce burning glow I  
offer homage.  
Be adoration paid to Fever coming each other day, the third, or  
two days running.

Hymn 116 Book VII. contains another charm against fever. A frog, which has two strings of different colours tied round it is supposed to relieve the patient of his disease.

- 1 Homage to him the burning one, shaker, exciter, violent !  
Homage to him the cold who acts according to his ancient will
- 2 May he, the lawless one, who comes alternate or two following  
days, pass over and possess the frog.

**Hair, Charm to promote the growth.**—There are three charms for this object. In Hymn 136, Book VI. quoted below, a plant with deep roots, and therefore supposed to strengthen the hair, is employed.

- 1 Born from the bosom of wide Earth the goddess, godlike Plant,  
art thou :  
So we, Nitatní ! dig thee up to strengthen and fix fast the hair.
- 2 Make the old firm, make new hair spring, lengthen what has  
already grown.
- 3 Thy hair where it is falling off, and with the roots is torn away,  
I wet and sprinkle with the Plant, the remedy for all disease.

**Headache.**—Hymn 8 Book IX. is for the cure of various diseases and pains more or less connected or supposed to be

connected with consumption. The first two stanzas, quoted below, treat of Headache, Earache, &c.

- 1 Each pain and ache that racks the head, earache, and erysipelas,  
All malady that wrings thy brow we charm away with this  
our spell.
- 2 From both thine ears, from parts thereof, thine earache, and the  
throbbing pain,  
All malady that wrings thy brow we charm away with this  
our spell.

**Insanity.**—In Hymn 111, Book VI. a man is described as insane either as a punishment for sin or caused by a demon. Agni, the Apsarasas, goddesses of gambling, “Maddeners of the mind,” Indra and Bhoja, are asked to let him go.

- 1 Unbind and loose for me this man, O Agni, who bound and  
well restrained is chattering folly.  
Afterward he will offer thee thy portion when he hath been  
delivered from his madness.
- 2 Let Agni gently soothe thy mind when fierce excitement  
troubles it.  
Well-skilled I make a medicine that thou no longer mayst be  
mad.
- 3 Insane through sin against the gods, or maddened by a demon’s  
power—  
Well-skilled I make a medicine to free thee from insanity.
- 4 May the Apsarasas release, Indra and Bhaga let thee go.  
May all the gods deliver thee that thou no longer mayst be mad.

**Jaundice.**—Hymn 22, Book I., of which two verses are quoted below, is partly taken from Rig-Veda I. 50. The Romans supposed that the disease was cured by looking at a starling, which died instead of the patient.

- 1 As the Sun rises let thy sore disease and yellowness depart.  
We compass and surround thee with the colour of a ruddy ox.
- 4 To parrots and to starlings we transfer thy sickly yellowness:  
Now in the yellow-coloured birds we lay this yellowness of thine.

**Leprosy.**—Susruta describes seven forms of this terrible disease, and eleven slighter forms. Plants were employed in the charms for its cure. There are other hymns on the same subject.

### I. 23.

- 1 O Plant, thou sprangest up at night, dusky, dark-coloured,  
black in hue!  
So, Rajanî, re-colour thou these ashy spots, this leprosy.
- 2 Expel the leprosy, remove from him the spots and ashy hue:  
Let thine own colour come to thee; drive far away the specks of  
white.
- 3 Dark is the place of thy repose, dark is the place thou dwellest in;  
Dusky and dark, O Plant, art thou; remove from him each  
speck and spot.

- 4 I with my spell have chased away the pallid sign of leprosy  
Caused by infection, on the skin, sprung from the body, from the  
bones.

**Nightmare and Evil Dreams.**—There are some references to these which are asked to be transferred to enemies. In some parts of India nightmare is supposed to be caused by a demon seated on the breast, attempting to strangle the person affected.

#### VII. 100.

- 1 I turn away from evil dream, from dream of sin, from indigence  
I make the prayer mine inmost friend. Hence ! torturing  
dreamy phantasies !

#### VI. 46.

- 2 We know thy birth, O Sleep, thou art son of the sisters of the  
Gods ! the minister of Yama thou, thou art Antaka (the  
Finisher), thou art Death.  
So well we know thee who thou art. Sleep, guard us from the  
evil dream.
- 3 As men discharge a debt, as they pay up an eighth and half  
an-eighth,  
So the whole evil dream do we pay and assign unto our foe.

**Poison, Against.**—There are several hymns on this subject against poisoned arrows, to render poisonous plants innocuous, &c. In Hymn 90, Book VI., quoted below, Rudra is addressed as the terrible god whose shafts bring diseases and death on men and cattle.

- 1 The shaft that Rudra hath shot forth against thy members and  
thy heart,  
Here do we draw from thee to-day, and turn it hence to every side
- 2 From all the hundred vessels spread throughout the members  
thy frame,  
From all those vessels and canals we call the poisonous matter  
forth.
- 3 Worship to thee, the archer, and O Rudra, to thy level  
shaft !  
Yea, worship to thine arrow when it left the bow, and when  
fell.

**Snakes, Scorpions, Mosquitoes, &c.**—There are several references to snakes. Hymn 56, Book VI. begins :

Let not the serpent slay us, O Gods, with our children and our folk

Hymn 56, Book VII. is a charm against bites and stings of various kinds, for which purpose a plant is employed. Brahmanpati is addressed as the god of charms and prayer.

- 1 Whether it came from viper, from black snake or snake with  
transverse stripes,  
Or Kankaparvan's bite, this herb hath made the poison powerless

- 2 Honey-born, honey-dropping, rich in honey, honey-sweet, this herb  
Is medicine that heals the wound and kills the 'gnat that bites and stings.
- 3 Whatever bit or sucked thy blood, we summon thence away from thee.  
The ineffectual poison of the little sharply-stinging gnat.
- 4 Thou here who crookest wicked jaws, thou tortuous, jointless, limbless thing,  
These jaws thou, Brahmanaspati ! shalt bend together like a reed.
- 5 This scorpion here that creeps along, low on the ground and powerless—  
I have removed his poison and then utterly demolished him.
- 6 No strength in thy two arms hast thou, nor in thy head, nor in thy waist :  
Then what is that small thing thou so viciously bearest in thy tail ?
- 7 The emmets make a meal of thee and peahens tear and mangle thee :  
All ye are crying out, In sooth the scorpion's poison hath no strength.
- 8 Thou creature who inflictest wounds both with thy mouth and with thy tail,  
No poison in thy mouth hast thou : what at thy tail's root will there be ?

**Tigers, Wolves, Thieves, etc.**—IV. 3. The tiger, frequently mentioned in the Atharva-Veda, seems to have been unknown to the writers of the Rig-Veda. The 'tiger-crushing charm' is supposed to have been a poisonous plant, deriving its growth from soma, king of plants, and its poison from Indra. Its origin is ascribed to the ancient fire-priest, Atharvan :

- 1 Three have gone hence and passed away, the man, the tiger, and the wolf.
- 3 We crush and rend to pieces both thine eyes, O Tiger, and thy jaws, and all thy twenty claws we break.
- 5 The thief who cometh near to-day departeth bruised and crushed to bits.  
By nearest way let him be gone. Let Indra slay him with his bolt.
- 7 Indra's and Soma's child, thou art Atharvan's tiger-crushing charm.

**Worms.**—II. 31. The charm is against worms of various kinds, those found in plants, in water, in human beings, and in cattle. Two verses are quoted, "Indra's mighty millstone" denotes his great power. The next hymn, 32, is against worms in cows.

- 1 With Indra's mighty millstone, that which crushes worms of every sort,  
I bray and bruise the worms to bits like vetches on the grinding stone.



- 5 Worms that are found on mountains, in the forests, that live  
in plants, in cattle, in the waters,  
Those that have made their way within our bodies,—these  
I destroy, the worms' whole generation.

**Wounds.** VI. 57.—Rudra is the healer as well as the  
inflioter of wounds and diseases.

- 1 This is a medicine indeed, Rudra's own medicine is this,  
Wherewith he warns the arrow off, one-shafted, with a hundred  
tips.
- 2 Besprinkle it with anodyne, bedew it with relieving balm :  
Strong, soothing is the medicine: bless us therewith that we  
may live.
- 3 Let it be health and joy to us. Let nothing vex or injure us.  
Down with the wound! Let all to us be balm, the whole be  
medicine.

**Charm to recover from the Point of Death or even to recall  
the departed Spirit.**—There are three hymns thus entitled. Hymn  
1, Book VIII. is partly quoted below :

Mátarisvan is a name of Váyu or Wind.

- 1 Homage to Death the Ender! May thy breathings, inward and  
outward, still remain within thee.  
Here stay this man united with his spirit in the Sun's realm, the  
world of life eternal!
- 2 Bhaga hath lifted up this man, and Soma with his filaments.  
Indra and Agni, and the gods the Maruts, raised him up to  
health.
- 3 Here is thy spirit, here thy breath, here is thy life, here is  
thy soul;  
By a celestial utterance we raise thee from Destruction's bonds.
- 4 Up from this place, O man, rise! sink not downward, casting  
away the bonds of Death that hold thee.  
Be not thou parted from this world, from sight of Agni and the  
Sun.
- 5 Purely for thee breathe Wind and Mátarisvan, and let the  
Waters rain on thee their nectar.  
The Sun shall shine with healing on thy body; Death shall have  
mercy on thee; do not leave us!
- 6 Upward must be thy way, O man, not downward: with life and  
mental vigour I endow thee.  
Ascend this car eternal, lightly rolling; then full of years shalt  
thou address the meeting.
- 7 Let not thy soul go thither, nor be lost to us; slight not the  
living, go not where the Fathers are.  
Let all the gods retain thee here in safety.
- 8 Yearn not for the departed ones, for those who lead men far  
away.  
Rise up from darkness into light; come, both thy hands we  
clasp in ours.

- 9 Let not the black dog and the brindled seize thee, two warders  
of the way sent forth by Yama.  
Come hither; do not hesitate: with mind averted stay not there.
- 10 Forbear to tread this path, for it is awful; that path I speak  
of which thou hast not travelled.  
Enter it not, O man; this way is darkness; forward is danger,  
hitherward is safety.
- . . . . .
- 18 Here let this man, O Gods, remain! let him not go to yonder  
world.  
We rescue him from Mrityu with a charm that hath a thousand  
powers.
- 19 I have delivered thee from Death. Strength-givers smelt and  
fashion thee!  
Let not she-fiends with wild loose locks, or fearful howlers  
yell at thee.
- 20 I have attained and captured thee! thou hast returned restored  
to youth,  
Perfect in body: so have I found all thy sight and all thy life.
- 21 Life hath breathed on thee; light hath come: darkness hath past  
away from thee.  
Far from thee we have buried Death, buried Destruction and  
Decline.

**Prayers or Charms for Long Life.**—In the times of the Atharva-Veda, the later gloomy views of life had not arisen. Long life is frequently desired. In the original home of the Aryans, "the complete term of life" was computed at a 'hundred winters. As they moved farther south, *autumns* were substituted, and lastly *rainy seasons* (*varsháni*.)

Hymn 69, Book XIX., quoted below, is in prose. The gods are supposed to be dependent on the sacrifices of men, as the worshipper is dependent on the gods.

1. Ye are alive. I fain would live. I fain would live my complete term of life. 2. Ye live dependent. I fain would live dependent. I fain would live my complete term of life. 3. Ye remain alive. I fain would remain alive. I fain would live my complete term of life. 4. Ye are life-givers. I fain would live. I fain would live my complete term of life.

## CHARMS WITH AMULETS.

An AMULET is something worn as a remedy or preservative against evils or mischief, such as diseases or witchcraft. Amulets have been used from very ancient times, and are still worn in many parts of the world. In some parts of Africa negroes are almost covered with them.

Some object was employed supposed to possess magical powers. Plants were often chosen. Some of them have already been mentioned as remedies for disease. *Arundhati*, a medicinal climbing

plant, was frequently used. The *Asvattha*, the pipal, or sacred fig-tree, was still more popular. In Hymn 4, Book V. the gods are said to sit under its shade in the third heaven. The *Kusa* or *Darbha* grass was supposed to possess sanctifying qualities. *Munja* grass was employed as a spell to cure dysentery. The *Jangida*, a plant not yet identified, is frequently mentioned as a charm against demons, and a specific for various diseases. The wood of the *Udumbara Fig-tree* was sometimes used. The wood of the *Tilaka* tree was supposed to ward off witchcraft. Several other plants, not yet identified, were also used as amulets.

The horn of the roebuck was employed to drive away hereditary disease. *Lead* was used as a charm against diseases and sorcery. An amulet of *gold* was thought to secure long life. An amulet composed of three threads, one of gold, one of silver, one of iron, was supposed to protect the three vital airs on which the life of the wearer depended. It likewise ensured general protection and prosperity.

In the numerous charms quoted, examples will be given of the employment of most of the above amulets.

#### Address to an Amulet. II. 17.

- 1 Power art thou, give me power. All hail!
- 2 Might art thou, give me might. All hail!
- 3 Strength art thou, give me strength. All hail!
- 4 Life art thou, give me life. All hail!
- 5 Ear art thou, give me hearing. Hail!
- 6 Eye art thou, give me eyes. All hail!
- 7 Shield art thou, shield me well. All hail!

#### The Jangida Plant. XIX. 34.

- 1 Jangida, thou art Angiras\*; thou art a guardian, Jangida.  
Let Jangida keep safely all our bipeds and our quadrupeds.
- 2 Dice-witcheries, the fifty-threes, the hundred witchcraft practisers,  
All these may Jangida make weak, bereft of their effectual force.
- 4 This counteracts the sorceress, this banishes malignity;  
Then may victorious Jangida prolong the days we have to live.
- 7 The ancient plants surpass thee not, nor any herbs of recent  
days,  
A potent charm is Jangida, a most felicitous defence.
- 9 To thee in truth, O Forest Tree, Indra the mighty One gave  
strength.  
Driving away all maladies, strike thou the demons down,  
O Plant.
- 10 Lumbago and rheumatic pain, consumptive cough and pleurisy,  
And fever which each autumn brings, may Jangida make  
powerless.

---

\* A great patriarchal Rishi.

**An Amulet of Darbha or Kusa Grass. XIX. 29.**

- 1 Pierce thou my rivals, Darbha, pierce the men who fain would fight with me.  
 Pierce all who wish me evil, pierce the men who hate me,  
 Amulet!  
 Split, Check, Crush, Shake, Bruise, Burn, Consume, thou my rivals.
- 9 Slay thou my rivals, Darbha, slay the men who fain would fight with me,

Slay all who wish me evil, slay the men who hate me, Amulet.

Some Amulets are supposed to confer superhuman powers like the Yoga Sastra. The following are examples :

**A Charm to obtain Invisibility.**—In Hymn 27, Book I. the cast skins of serpents are employed as an amulet to make travellers invisible to robbers.

- 1 There on the bank those Vipers lie, thrice-seven, having cast their skins :  
 Now we with their discarded sloughs bind close and cover up the eyes of the malicious highway thief.

**A Charm for superhuman Powers of Sight.**—In Hymn 20, Book IV. a magical plant, addressed as a goddess, is supposed to enable a person to see every thing in heaven and earth, including lemons of all kinds :

- 1 It sees in front, it sees behind, it sees afar away, it sees  
 The sky, the firmament, and earth : all this, O Goddess, it beholds.
- 2 Through thee, O godlike Plant, may I behold all creatures that exist,  
 Three several heavens, three several earths, and these six regions one by one.
- 6 Make me see Yátudhánas, make thou Yátudhánis visible.  
 Make me see all Pisáchas. With this prayer, O Plant, I hold thee fast.

**A Charm for Surpassing Strength.**—VI. 38.

- 1 What energy the lion hath, the tiger, adder, and burning fire,  
 Bráhmaṇ, or Súrya,  
 And the blest Goddess who gave birth to Indra, come unto us conjoined with strength and vigour !
- 2 All energy of elephant and panther, all energy of gold, men, kine, and waters,
- 3 Might in car, axles, in the strong bull's courage, in Varuna's breath, in Váta, in Parjanya,  
 In Warrior, in the war drum stretched for battle, in the man's roar, and in the horse's mettle,

## COUNTER CHARMS.

It was supposed that the magical incantations of enemies might be rendered powerless or even made to revert upon their own hands. Two examples are given.

Hymn 24, Book II., is a charm against the magic art of demons. Four male demons or sorcerers and four females of the same class are addressed.

- 1 O Serabhaka, Serabha, back fall your arts of witchery ! Bac  
Kimidins ! let your weapon fall.  
Eat your possessor ; eat ye him who sent you forth ; eat ye  
own flesh.

&amp;c.

&amp;c.

&amp;c.

Hymn 18, Book IV. is a counter-charm against the magical incantations of others. A magical plant, gathered at full moon when the night is as day, is employed.

- 1 The moonlight equalleth the sun, night is the rival of the day  
I make effectual power my help : let magic arts be impotent.
- 2 Gods ! if one make and bring a spell on some man's house who  
knows it not,  
Close as the calf that sucks the cow may it revert and cling  
him.
- 5 I with this Plant have ruined all malignant powers of witchery  
The spell which they have laid upon thy field, thy cattle  
thy men

**Charms against Evil Omens.**—In ancient times, as at present the Hindus attached great importance to supposed signs of the success or failure of an undertaking. The lizard bears a high reputation as a prophet, although there is a southern proverb, "The lizard which was the oracle of the whole village has fallen into the broth-pot." The ass appropriately holds a place. Owls and ravens are other guides.

Hymn 64, Books VII. contains a charm to avert an evil omen which the raven is concerned. Agni Gárhapatya denotes the sacred fire of the householder.

- 1 From all that woe and trouble may the Waters save and rescue  
me,  
Whate'er the Raven, black of hue, flying out hitherward hath  
dropped.
- 2 My Agni Gárhapatya save and set me free from all this guilt  
Which the black Raven with thy mouth, O Nirriti,\* hath  
wiped away.

**A Charm to avert Evil Omens.**—VI. 29.

- 1 On those men yonder fall the winged missile : the screech  
of the Owl is ineffective,  
And that the Dove beside the fire hath settled.

---

\* Demon of destruction.

- 2 Thine envoys who came hither, O Destruction, sent or not sent  
by thee unto our dwelling,  
The Dove and Owl, effectless be their visit !

NOTE.—The Owl and Dove were supposed to be birds of evil omen.

### CHARMS AGAINST DEMONS.

Even in the times of the Rig-Veda supposed malignant spirits were an object of terror to the Aryans. This feeling was intensified by longer contact with the aborigines, among whom, as throughout a great part of Asia, demonolatry was the prevailing superstition. Sir Monier Williams says :

"The great majority of the inhabitants of India, from the cradle of the burning ground, are haunted and oppressed by a perpetual dread of demons. They are firmly convinced that evil spirits of all kinds, from malignant fiends to merely mischievous imps and elves, are ever on the watch to harm, harass, and torment them, to cause plague, sickness, famine and disaster, to impede, injure, and mar every good work.

"So deep-seated and ineradicable is the fear of evil spirits in the minds of the lower orders, that in many villages of India the doors of the houses are never allowed to face the South, lest the entrance of some dreaded demon should be facilitated."\*

The leading demons, male and female, mentioned in the Atharva-Veda will be briefly described :

**Arayis.**—"One-eyed limping hags."

**Asuras.**—Evil spirits so called after the giants who fought with the gods.

**Dasyus.**—Applied both to the wild indigenous races, and to the malignant demons of the air, withholders of the seasonable rain.

**Grahi.**—A female fiend who seizes men, and causes death and disease.

**Kimidins and Kimidinis.**—A class of evil spirits whose name is said originally to mean one who goes about crying *Kim idánim*. What now?—a vile and treacherous spy and informer.

**Panis.**—Demons of darkness who steal the cows of the gods, and shut them up in a cavern,—that is, conceal the rays of daylight in dark clouds.

**Pisachas and Pisachis.**—General terms for male and female malignant spirits.

**Rakshasas and Rakshasis.**—Violent and voracious man-eaters.

**Yatudhanas and Yatudanis.**—A class of evil spirits or sorcerers. Jayana explains them as Rakshasas, but they are apparently distinct.

In Hymn 6, Book VIII., the names of a great many demons are given who attack women ; as "the black and hairy Asura,"

\* *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, pp. 210, 245.

"Snapper and Feeler," "him who eats raw flesh and him who lick his lips;" &c.

Agni and Indra are the two noted "fiend-slayers." Out of about fourteen hymns for the destruction of demons and sorcerers three are quoted below.

#### BOOK I. 28.

- 1 God Agni hath come forth to us, fiend-slayer, chaser of diseases. Burning the Yátudhánas up, Kimídins, and deceitful ones.
- 2 Consume the Yátudhánas, God! meet the Kimídins with the flame:  
Burn up the Yátudhánas as they face thee, thou whose path is black!
- 3 She who hath cursed us with a curse, or hath conceived murderous sin;  
Or seized our son to take his blood, let her devour the child stark bare.
- 4 Let her, the Yátudhání eat son, sister, and her daughter's child. Now let the Twain\* by turns destroy the wild-haired Yátudhání and crush down Arájis to the earth!

#### BOOK VI. 32.

- 1 With butter in his hall where fire is burning, perform the sacrifice which quells the goblins.  
Burn from afar against the demons, Agni! Afflict not in thy fury us who praise thee.
- 2 Let Rudra break your necks, O ye Pisáchas, and split your ribs asunder, Yátudhánas!  
Here Mitra-Yaruna! may we dwell safely: with splendour drive the greedy demons backward.  
Let them not find a surety or a refuge, but torn away go down to Death together.

#### BOOK VII. 23.

The fearful dream, and indigence, the monster, the malignant hags,  
All female fiends of evil name and wicked tongue we drive afar.

#### CHARMS CONNECTED WITH HOME LIFE.

**Picture of Aryan Home Life.**—The charms may be fitly introduced by the following graphic sketch by Griffith:

"Setting aside the rivalries, wars and conquests of kings and princes, and the lofty claims and powers of the hierarchy, we may follow the course of the middle-class Aryan's life from the cradle to the funeral pile, and even accompany him to his final home in the world of the Departed.

---

\* Agni and Indra.

"We hear the benedictive charm pronounced over the expectant mother before her child is born, and in due time on the darling's first two teeth. We attend the solemn ceremony in which the youth is invested with his *toga virilis*, the new garment whose assumption signifies his recognition as an adult member of the family with new responsibilities and new duties to perform. As his fancy turns to thoughts of love, we hear him murmuring the charm which shall win him the maiden of his choice, and the lullaby which shall seal every eye but hers in his beloved's house and enable him to visit her without detection or suspicion. We follow him in his formal and somewhat unromantic wooing of a bride through a friend who acts as match-maker; we see the nuptial procession and the bride's introduction to her new home; we hear her benediction on the bridegroom, and the epithalamium pronounced over the wedded pair. The young husband is an agriculturist, and we see him in his field superintending the ploughmen and praying to Indra and Púshan and the Genii of agriculture to bless their labours. Anon, with propitiatory prayer, he is cutting a new channel to bring the water of the brook to the land which is ready for irrigation; or he is praying for rain or an abundant crop. Again, when the corn is ripe, he is busy among the men who gather in the harvest, invoking the aid of the good-natured goblins, and leaving on the ground some sheaves to remunerate their toil. At sunset he superintends the return of the cows who have been grazing under the protection of the Wind-God in the breezy pastures and their return under Divine guidance, and the reunion of all the members of the household are celebrated with symbolical mixt oblation, with milk and a brew of grain.

"His wealth and family increase in answer to his repeated prayer for children and riches, and a new house must be built on a larger scale. The building is erected under the careful eye of the master and blessed and consecrated with prayers to the Gods and to the Queen of the Home. The mistress of the house brings forth the well-filled pitcher, all present are regaled with 'the stream of molten butter blent with nectar'—which seems to be a euphemistic name for some sort of good liquor,—and the householder enters and takes formal possession of his new dwelling with fire and water, the two most important necessities of human life. The house, moreover—a wooden building with a thatched roof—has been specially assured against fire by a prayer to Agni the God of that element with the additional security afforded by the immediate neighbourhood of a good stream or pool of water.

"Such, or something like this, was the ordinary life of the average middle-class agriculturist. A devout believer in the gods, he did not spend his substance on the performance of costly sacrifices, but was content with simple ceremonies and such humble offerings as he could well afford. His chief care was for the health and well-being of himself, his wife, children, and dependents, for plentiful harvests, and for thriving and multiplying cattle; and these were the blessings for which he most frequently prayed. His chief troubles were an occasional touch of malarial fever or rheumatism, a late or scanty rainfall, a storm that lodged his ripe barley, lightning that struck his cattle, and similar mischances caused by the anger of the gods or the malevolence of demons; and he was always armed with prayers and spells against the recurrence of such disasters.



"He was a man of importance in his village, and when he attended the assembly—which may have been a kind of Municipal Committee or Parish Council—his great ambition was to command respect and attention as a speaker, and with this view he fortified himself with charm and magic herb that inspired eloquence, and enabled him to overpower his opponents in debate. His life, on the whole, was somewhat monotonous and dull, but it seems to have suited him as he was continually praying that it might be extended to its full natural duration of a hundred years. At the end of that time, with his sons and his sons' children around him, he was ready to pass away to the felicity that awaited him in the world of the Fathers.

The small merchant or trader lived a less settled life and saw more of the world than the agriculturist. We see him on the point of starting on a journey for business purposes with his little stock of goods. He first propitiates Indra who as a merchant also, the God who trades and traffics with his worshippers, requiring and receiving prayer and oblations in exchange for the blessings which he sends, and who will now free the travelling merchant's path from wild beasts, robbers, and enemies of every kind. He prays also to many other deities that he may make a rich profit and gain a hundred treasures, and commits the care of his children and cattle in his absence to Agni, the God of all Aryan men. His ritual is an extensive one as he may be about to journey to all points of the compass, and he must accordingly conciliate all the divine Warders of the heavenly regions. He has to recite some ten hymns of Book VI. invoking the aid of all protecting deities, not forgetting to consult the Weather-Prophet, and to obtain from him the promise of auspicious mornings, noons, and nights. He bids an affectionate farewell to the houses of his village, and departs on his way encouraged by the hymn which ensures him a safe and successful journey. In due time he returns having bartered his wares for the treasures of distant places, for bdellium and other fragrant gums and unguents, for Kushta and other foreign plants and drugs of healing virtue, for mother-of-pearl, ornaments for the women, and perhaps cloth of finer wool.

"The merchant's object in life is gain, and he is not always very scrupulous in his dealings. If he is in debt he would prefer to be freed by the intervention of a god, and not by his own exertions; and he is bold enough even to pray for release from debts which he has incurred without intending to pay them. He is probably the gambler who prays for success in play, and for pardon when he has been guilty of cheating." *Preface* pp. ix.-xiii.

## CHARMS CONNECTED WITH FAMILY LIFE.

### A MAN'S LOVE CHARMS.

There are seven hymns entitled, "A Man's Love Charms." They show that infant marriage did not prevail in Vedic times.

#### A Charm to win a Maiden's Love. VI. 8.

- 1 Like as the creeper throws her arms on every side around the tree,  
So hold thou me in thine embrace that thou mayst be in love with me, my darling, never to depart.

- 2 As, when he mounts, the eagle strikes his pinions downward on the earth,  
So do I strike thy spirit down that thou mayst be in love with me, my darling, never to depart.
- 3 As in his rapid course the Sun encompasses the heaven and earth,  
So do I compass round thy mind that thou mayst be in love with me, my darling, never to depart.

### A Charm to win a Bride. VI. 82.

- 1 I call the name of him who comes, hath come, and still draws nigh to us.  
Foe-slaying Indra's name I love, the Vasus' friend with hundred powers.
- 2 Thus Bhaga spake to me : Let him bring thee a consort by the path.  
Whereon the Asvins brought the bride Súrýá, the child of Savitar.
- 3 Great, Indra, is that hook of thine, bestowing treasure, wrought of gold :  
Therewith, O Lord of Might, bestow a wife on me who long to wed.

NOTE.—The Asvins are said to have obtained Súrýá, daughter of the Sun, as a wife for Soma, the Moon-God.

### Sleep Charm of a Lover who is secretly visiting his Love. IV. 5.

- 1 The Bull who hath a thousand horns, who rises up from out the sea,—  
By him the strong and mighty one we lull the folk to rest and sleep.
- 2 Over the surface of the earth there breathes no wind, there looks no eye.  
Lull all the women, lull the dogs to sleep, with Indra as thy friend !
- 3 The women sleeping in the court, lying without, or stretched on beds,  
The matrons with their odorous sweets—these, one and all, we lull to sleep.
- 6 Sleep mother, let the father sleep, sleep dog, and master of the home.  
Let all her kinsmen sleep, sleep all the people who are round about.
- 7 With soporific charm, O Sleep, lull thou to slumber all the folk,  
Let the rest sleep till break of day, I will remain awake till dawn,  
like Indra free from scath and harm.

NOTE.—The Bull is variously supposed to mean the sun, the starry heavens, the moon.

### Charm for the safe delivery of a Son. VI. 81.

- 1 Thou art a grasper, holding fast both hands ; thou drivest fiends away.  
A holder both of progeny and riches hath this Ring become.

- 2 Prepare accordantly, O Ring, the mother for the infant's birth  
On the right way bring forth the boy. Make him come hither  
I am here.
- 3 The Amulet which Aditi wore when desirous of a son,  
Tvashtar hath bound upon this dame and said, Be mother of  
boy.

### Benediction on a new-born child. VI. 110.

- 1 Yea, ancient, meet for praise at sacrifices, ever and now thou  
sittest down as Hotar.  
And now, O Agni, make thy person friendly, and win felicity  
for us by worship.
- 2 'Neath Jyaishtaghni and Yama's Two Releasers this child was  
born: preserve him from uprooting.  
He shall conduct him safe past all misfortunes to lengthen  
life that lasts a hundred autumns.
- 3 Born on the Tiger's day was he, a hero, the Constellation's child  
born brave and manly.  
Let him not wound, when grown in strength, his father, nor  
disregard his mother, her who bare him.

NOTES.—A hymn to Agni. *Jyaishtaghni*: the 16th lunar mansion. *Yama's Two Releasers*: two auspicious stars whose rising releases from Death and disease. The *Tiger* is in the Atharva-Veda the type of valour.

### A Blessing on a Child's first two Teeth. VI. 140.

- 1 Two tigers have grown up who long to eat the mother and the  
sire:  
Soothe, Brahmanaspati, and thou, O Játavedas, both these teeth
- 2 Let rice and barley be your food, eat also beans and sesamum,  
This is the share allotted you, to be your portion, ye two Teeth  
Harm not your mother and your sire.
- 3 Both fellow-teeth have been invoked, gentle and bringing happiness.  
Elsewhither let the fierceness of your nature turn away, O Teeth  
harm not your mother or your sire.

### A Youth's Investiture with a new Garment. II. 13.

- 1 Strength-giver, winning lengthened life, O Agni, with face, and  
back shining with molten butter,  
Drink thou the butter and fair milk and honey, and, as a sire  
his sons, keep this man safely.
- 2 For us surround him, cover him with splendour, give him long  
life, and death when age removes him,  
The garment hath Brihaspati presented to Soma, to the King,  
to wrap about him.
- 3 Thou for our weal hast clothed thee in the mantle: thou  
hast become our heifers' guard from witchcraft.  
Live thou a hundred full and plenteous autumns, and wrap thee  
in prosperity of riches.

- 4 Come hither, stand upon the stone : thy body shall become a stone,  
The Universal Gods shall make thy life a hundred autumns long.
- 5 So may the Universal Gods protect thee, whom we divest of raiment worn aforetime.  
So after thee, well-formed and growing stronger, be born a multitude of thriving brothers.

### Marriage Ceremonies.

These are described under Hymns about Women.

#### Benediction on the Completion of a New Home. III. 12.

- 1 Here even here I fix my firm-set dwelling ; flowing with fatness may it stand in safety.  
May we approach thee, House ! with all our people ; unharmed and goodly men, and dwell within thee.
- 3 A spacious store, O House, art thou, full of clean corn and lofty-roofed.  
Let the young calf and little boy approach thee, and milch-kine streaming homeward in the evening.
- 4 This House may Savitar and Váyu stablish, Brihaspati who knows the way, and Indra.  
May the moist Maruts sprinkle it with fatness, and may King Bhaga make our corn-land fruitful.
- 8 Bring hitherward, O dame, the well-filled pitcher, the stream, of molten butter blent with nectar.  
Bedew these drinkers with a draught of Amrit. May all our hopes' fulfilment guard this dwelling.
- 9 Water that kills Consumption, free from all Consumption here I bring.  
With Agni, the immortal One, I enter and possess the house.

### AGRICULTURAL LABOURS.

Several charms refers to these—a few of which may be quoted.

#### A Farmer's song to speed the Plough. III. 17.

- 1 Wise and devoted to the gods, the skilful men bind ploughropes fast,  
And lay the yokes on either side.
- 6 Happily work our steers and men ! May the plough furrow happily.  
Happily be the traces bound. Happily ply the driving-goad.
- 8 Auspicious Sítá, come thou near ; we venerate and worship thee  
That thou mayst bless and prosper us and bring us fruits abundantly.
- 9 Loved by the Visvedevas and the Maruts, let Sétá be bedewed with oil and honey.  
Turn thou to us with wealth of milk, O Sita, in vigorous strength and pouring streams of fatness.

### A Charm to hasten the coming of the Rains.

After the long hot season when the earth is as iron, the coming of the rains is eagerly desired. Indra or Parjanya was especially worshipped as able, with his thunderbolts, to cleave the rain-clouds and compel them to let fall their treasures. Some verses from Hymn 15, Book IV. are quoted below :

- 1 Let all the misty regions fly together, let all the rain-clouds be sped by wind, assemble.  
Let waters satisfy the earth, the voices of the great mist-enveloped Bull who roareth.
- 8 Let lightning flash on every side; from all the regions blow the winds!  
Urged by the Maruts let the clouds pour down their rain upon the earth.
- 13 They who lay quiet for a year, the Brahmans who fulfil their vows,  
The frogs, have lifted up their voice, the voice Parjanya hath inspired.
- 16 Lift up the mighty cask, and pour down water; let the wind blow and lightning flash around us.  
Let sacrifice be paid, and, widely scattered, let herbs and plants be full of joy and gladness.

NOTES.—The *Bull* : Parjanya, god of the rain-cloud. Verse 13 is taken from Rig-Veda, vii. 103. The frogs rejoicing in the rains are represented as Brahmans engaged in religious ceremonies. *Cask* : rain-cloud.

### A Charm to protect corn from Lightning and Drought.

BOOK VII. 11.

That far-spread thunder, sent from thee, which cometh on all the world, a high celestial signal—

Strike not, O God, our growing corn with lightning, nor kill it with the burning rays of Sûrya.

### CHARMS TO PROTECT CATTLE.

Both oxen and cows occupy a prominent place in the Atharva Veda. Hymn 25, Book xix is a charm to be used when a young ox is yoked for the first time. Hymn 16, Book V. contains a charm for the increase of cattle. Hymn 21, Book IV. is a glorification and benediction addressed to cows. Hymn 59, Book VI., quoted below is a charm, addressed to Arundhati, to protect cattle and men.

Hymn 32, Book II, is a charm against the worms which infect cows. Hymn 77 Book VI is a charm to bring the cattle home and Hymn 14, Book III. is a benediction of the cattle-pen, in which the cows are kept at night.

- 1 First, O Arundhati, protect our oxen and our milky kine :  
Protect each one that is infirm, each quadruped, that yields no milk.
- 2 Let the Plant give us sheltering aid, Arundhati allied with gods,  
Avert consumption from our men and make our cow-pen rich in milk.
- 3 I welcome the auspicious Plant, life-giving, wearing every hue,  
Far from our cattle may it turn the deadly dart which Rudra casts.

### Charm to make a Cow love its Calf. VI. 70.

This might seem a work of supererogation ; but the Aryan knew better. Bloomfield, in his commentary, describes how it was used :

"The practice consists in washing the calf, sprinkling it with the cow's urine, leading it thrice around the cow and tying it near her while the hymn is being recited. It is then recited once more over the head and ears of the calf." p. 493.

1. As wine associates with flesh, as dice attend the gaming-board,  
As an enamoured man's desire is firmly set upon a dame,  
So let thy heart and soul, O Cow, be firmly set upon thy calf.  
    &c., &c.

### Charm for the destruction of Vermin. VI. 50.

- 1 Destroy the rat, the mole, the boring beetle, cut off their heads  
and crush their ribs, O Asvins.  
Bind fast their months ; let them not eat our barley ; so  
guard, ye twain, our growing corn from danger.
- 3 Harken to me, lord of the female borer, lord of the female  
grub ! ye rough-toothed vermin !  
Whate'er ye be, dwelling in woods, and piercing, we crush and  
mangle all those piercing insects

### Charm for a Plentiful Harvest. VI. 142.

- 1 Spring high, O Barley, and become much through thine own  
magnificence :  
Burst all the vessels ; let the bolt from heaven forbear to strike  
thee down.
- 2 As we invite and call to thee, Barley, a God who heareth us,  
Raise thyself up like heaven on high, and be exhaustless as the  
sea.
- 3 Exhaustless let thine out-turns be, exhaustless be thy gathered  
heaps,  
Exhaustless be thy givers, and exhaustless those who eat of thee.

### Song of Harvest Home. III. 24.

- 5 O Hundred-handed, gather up. O Thousand-handed, pour thou  
forth.  
Bring hither increase of the corn prepared and yet to be  
prepared.

- 6 Three sheaves are the Gandharvas' claim, the lady of the house  
bath four.  
We touch thee with the sheaf that is the most abundant of  
them all.
- 7 Adding and Gathering are thy two attendants, O Prajapati.  
May they bring hither increase, wealth abundant, inexhaustible.

NOTE.—Three sheaves were left on the ground for the demons who are here called Gandharvas, a higher class of celestial beings; four sheaves were for the mistress; and the best of all is offered as a sample to the owner of the field.

#### MISCELLANEOUS CHARMS CONNECTED WITH HOME LIFE.

##### Prayer for Wealth and Children.

These form the most frequent petitions.

##### BOOK VII. 17.

- 1 May the Ordainer give us wealth, Lord, ruler of the world of  
life: with full hand may he give to us.
- 2 May Dhátar grant the worshipper henceforth inperishable life.  
May we obtain the favour of the God who giveth every boon.
- 3 To him may Dhátar grant all kinds of blessings who, craving  
children, serves him in his dwelling.  
Him may the Gods invest with life eternal, yea, all the gods as  
Aditi accordant.
- 4 May this our gift please Savitar, Ráti, Dhátar, Prajapati, as  
Agni, Lord of Treasures,  
May Tvashtar, Vishnu, blessing him with children, give store  
riches to the sacrificer.

NOTE.—*Ráti*, the gift personified as a goddess.

##### The Hospitable Reception of Guests. IX. 6.

This is a long prose hymn in which the hospitable reception of  
guests is regarded as identical with sacrifice offered to the god.  
Only a few verses can be quoted:

- 19 When he says, Bring out more, he lengthens his life thereby.
- 25 This man whose food they eat hath all his wickedness blotted  
out. 26. All that man's sin whose food they do not eat  
remains unblotted out.
- 28 The arranged sacrifice of the man who offers food is a sacrifice  
to Prajapati. 29. The man who offers food follows the steps  
of Prajapati.

##### A Charm to win Love in a Family. III. 30.

- 1 Freedom from hate I bring to you, concord and unanimity.  
Love one another as the cow loveth the calf that she hath borne.
- 2 One-minded with his mother let the son be loyal to his sire.  
Let the wife, calm and gentle, speak words sweet as honey to her  
lord.
- 3 No brother hate his brother, no sister to sister be unkind.  
Unanimous, with one intent, speak ye your speech in friendliness.

- 4 That spell through which gods sever not, nor ever bear each other hate,  
That spell we lay upon your home, a bond of union for the men.
- 7 With binding charm I make you all united, obeying one sole leader and one-minded.  
Even as the gods who watch and guard the Amrit, at morn and eve may ye be kindly-hearted.

Hymn 42, Book III. is a "Charm to reconcile estranged friends."

### A Charm for Influence at a Meeting. VII. 12.

- 1 In concord may Prajapati's two daughters, Gathering and Assembly, both protect me.  
May every man I meet respect and aid me. Fair be my words,  
O Fathers, at the meetings.
- 2 Let all the company who join the Conference agree with me.
- 3 Indra, make me conspicuous in all this gathered company.

Hymn 27, Book II. is a charm against an opponent in a debate.

### A Merchant's Prayer for Success in Business.

The prayer is primarily addressed to the "Merchant Indra," or reasons which have already been stated. Vaisvánara and Játaveas are epithets applied to Agni.

#### BOOK III. 15.

- 1 I stir and animate the merchant Indra: may he approach and be our guide and leader.  
Chasing ill-will, wild beast, and highway robber, may he who hath the power give me riches.
- 2 The many paths which gods are wont to travel, the paths which go between the earth and heaven,  
May they rejoice with me in milk and fatness that I may make rich profit by my purchase.
- 3 With fuel, Agni! and with butter, longing, mine offering I present for strength and conquest;  
With prayer, so far as I have strength, adoring—this holy hymn to gain a hundred treasures.
- 4 Pardon this stubbornness of ours, O Agni, the distant pathway which our feet have trodden.  
Propitious unto us be sale and barter, may interchange of merchandise enrich me.  
Accept, ye twain, accordant, this libation! Prosperous be our ventures and incomings.
- 5 The wealth wherewith I carry on my traffic, seeking, ye gods! wealth with the wealth I offer,  
May this grow more for me, not less: O Agni, through sacrifice chase those away who hinder profit!



- 6 The wealth wherewith I carry on my traffic, seeking, ye gods  
wealth with the wealth I offer,  
Herein may Indra, Savitar, and Soma, Prajapati and Agni give  
me splendour.
- 7 With reverence we sing thy praise, O Hotar-priest Vaiśvánara.  
Over our children keep thou watch, over our bodies, kine, and  
lives.
- 8 Still to thee ever will we bring oblation, as to a stabled horse  
O Játavedas.  
Joying in food and in the growth of riches may we thy servants,  
Agni, never suffer.

## MISCELLANEOUS HYMNS.

Several hymns will now be noticed which vary in character.

### HYMNS ABOUT KINGS.

There are some hymns about the election of a King, the consecration of a King, the benediction of a King, the restoration of a King, a King's address to an amulet which is to strengthen his authority; a King's charm to secure the fidelity of his people; a charm to reconcile a King's discontented people. There is even a charm to tame an elephant for a King.

One specimen is given.

#### A Benediction on a newly consecrated King. IV. 22.

1. Exalt and strengthen this my Prince, O Indra. Make him sole  
lord and leader of the people.  
Scatter his foes, deliver all his rivals into his hand in struggles  
for precedence.
2. Give him a share in village, kine, and horses, and leave his  
enemy without a portion.  
Let him as King be head and chief of Princes. Give up to  
him, O Indra, every foeman. &c., &c.

### CHARMS FOR SUCCESS IN WAR AND THE DESTRUCTION OF ENEMIES.

Hymns are addressed to the chariot and war-drum as charms to secure victory over enemies; there are imprecations against hostile army, &c. A few quotations are made.

#### A Charm to secure success in Battle. III. 1.

- 1 Let the wise Agni go against our foemen, burning against ill-will  
and imprecation.  
Let him bewilder our opponents' army. Let Játavedas smite  
and make them harmless.

- 4 Shot down the slope, with thy two tawny coursers, forth go thy bolt, destroying foes, O Indra!  
Slay those who fly, slay those who stand and follow.  
On every side fulfil these men's intention.
- 6 Let Indra daze their army. Let the Maruts slay it with their might.  
Let Agni take their eyes away, and let the conquered host retreat.

NOTE.—The hymn was supposed to have magical effect in bewildering an enemy.

### Charms for the Destruction of Enemies.

#### Book IV. 36.

- 1 Endowed with true strength, let the Bull, Agni Vaisvánara, burn them up,  
Him who would pain and injure us, him who would treat us as a foe.
- 2 Him who, unharmed, would injure us, and him who, harmed, would do us harm,  
I lay between the doubled fangs of Agni, of Vaisvánara.

#### Book VII. 59.

Like a tree struck by lightning may the man be withered from the root,  
Who curseth us who curse him not, or, when we curse him, curseth us.

#### Book XIX. 29.

- 1 Pierce thou my rivals, Darbha, pierce the men who fain would fight with me.  
Pierce all who wish me evil, pierce the men who hate me, Amulet.
- 9 Slay thou my rivals, Darbha, slay the men who fain would fight with me.  
Slay all who wish me evil, slay the men who hate me, Amulet.

### HYMNS ON BRAHMANS.

The four castes are only once mentioned in the Rig-Veda in one of the latest hymns. By the time the Atharva-Veda was collected, caste had been largely developed. There are numerous references to Brahmans and Kshatriyas, and the rights of the former are carefully guarded.

Two hymns about Brahmans are partly quoted:

#### The Duty of giving cows to Brahmans, and the Danger of withholding them. XII. 4.

- 1 I give the gift, shall be his word; and straightway they have bound the Cow.  
For Brahman priests who beg the boon. That bringeth sons and progeny.

- 10 For gods and Brahman is the Cow produced when first she  
springs to life,  
Hence to the priests must she be given : this they call guarding  
private wealth.
- 25 The Cow deprives of progeny and makes him poor in cattle who  
Retains in his possession her whom Brahman have solicited

### The Sin and Danger of Robbing a Brahman of his Cow.

In Hymn 5, Book XII., this is shown at great length. Only  
a few verses are quoted. The consequences are terrific :

- 5 Of the Kshatriya who taketh to himself this Brahman's cow  
and oppresseth the Brahman,  
The glory, the heroism, and the favouring fortune depart.
- 67 Strike off the shoulders and the head.
- 68 Snatch thou the hair from off his head, and from his body strip  
the skin :
- 69 Tear out his sinews, cause his flesh to fall in pieces from his  
frame.
- 70 Crush thou his bones together, strike and beat the marrow out of  
him.
- 71 Dislocate all his limbs and joints.
- 72 From earth let the carnivorous Agni drive him, let Váyu burn him  
from mid-air's broad region,
- 73 From heaven let Súrya drive him and consume him.

In Hymn 18, Book V., a Kshatriya is warned against the sin  
of eating a Brahman's cow. In the preceding hymn, taken part  
from Rig-Veda X. 109, an account is given of the abduction by  
Kshatriya of a Brahman's wife and her subsequent restoration to her  
husband. Hymn 19, Book V., is on the wickedness and ruinous  
consequences of oppressing, robbing, or insulting a Brahman.

### HYMNS ABOUT DEBT.

The Indian tendency to run into debt is of long standing. In  
the Rig-Veda a prayer is addressed to Varuna for freedom from  
debt. The following, in the Atharva-Veda, is of the same character

#### BOOK VI. 117.

- 1 That which I eat, a debt which is still owing, the tribute due  
to Yama, which supports me,  
Thereby may I be free from debt, O Agni. Thou knowest how  
rend all bonds asunder.
- 3 May we be free in this world and that yonder, in the other  
world may we be unindebted.  
May we, debt-free, abide in all the pathways, in all the worlds  
which Gods and Fathers visit.

### Release from Debts incurred without intention of Payment.

Agni is asked to aid the suppliant in the dishonest attempt  
to break his promise, and get rid of debts contracted without

ntention of repayment. Agni knows how to tear to pieces the bonds of debt. Thus the creditor's hopes of payment would be disappointed.

### Book VI. 119.

- 1 The debt which I incur, not gaming, Agni! and, not intending to repay, acknowledge,  
That may Vaisvánara, the best, our sovran, carry away into the world of virtue.
- 2 I cause Vaisvánara to know, confessing the debt whose payment to the gods is promised.  
He knows to tear asunder all these nooses: so may we dwell with him the gentle-minded.
- 3 Vaisvánara the Purifier purge me when I oppose their hope and break my promise,  
Unknowing in my heart. With supplication, whatever guilt there is in that, I banish.

In Hymn 117, Book VI. the petitioner prays for release from debt, both in this world and in the next. Newcomers in heaven were expected to pay one-sixteenth of their merit to Yama; but they might compound for it by a sacrifice on earth.

### HYMNS ON GAMBLING.

In the Rig-Veda a gambler bewails the results of his folly. The following two hymns are from the Atharva-Veda.

#### A Charm for success in Gambling. IV. 38.

- 1 Hither I call the Apsaras, victorious, who plays with skill,  
Her who comes freely forth to view, who wins the stakes in games of dice.
- 3 Dancing around us with the dice, winning the wager by her play,  
May she obtain the stake for us and gain the victory with skill.  
May she approach us full of strength; let them not win this wealth of ours.

NOTES.—The Apsarases, the wives of the Gandharvas, were supposed to be fond of gambling and able to influence the gambler's luck.

#### A Prayer asking forgiveness for cheating at Play. VI. 118.

- 1 If we have sinned with both our hands, desiring to take the host of dice for our possession,  
May both Apsarases to-day forgive us that debt, the fiercely-conquering, fiercely-looking.
- 2 Stern viewers of their sins who rule the people, forgive us what hath happened as we gambled.  
Not urging us to pay the debt we owed him, he with a cord hath gone to Yama's kingdom.

NOTE.—*With a cord*: to keep us bound as debtors in the other world.

## SELECTIONS FROM FUNERAL HYMNS.

Book XVIII. contains four Hymns relating to funeral rites and sacrificial offerings to the Pitris. They are nearly all taken from the Rig-Veda Book X., with variations. They begin with a dialogue between Yama and his twin sister Yami, the first human pair, the originators of the race. Yami at first declines the request of Yama to make her his wife. A few quotations are given.

**Address to the spirit of the Dead Man. XVIII. 1.**

- 54 Go forth, go forth upon the homeward pathways whither our sires of old have gone before us.  
There shalt thou look on both the Kings enjoying their sacred food, God Varuna and Yama.

**Hymn 2.**

- 55 Lord of all life, let Ayu (Váyu) guard thee, Púshan convey thee forward on the distant pathway.  
May Savitar the God conduct thee thither where dwell the pious who have gone before thee.

**Hymn 3.**

- 58 Meet Yama, meet the Fathers, meet the merit of virtuous action in the loftiest heaven.  
Leave sin and evil, seek anew thy dwelling : so bright with glory let him join his body.  
73 Mount to this life, removing all defilement : here thine own kindred shine with lofty splendour.  
Depart thou ; be not left behind : go forward, first of those here unto the world of Fathers.

**Address to Agni. XVIII. 2.**

- 10 Away, O Agni, to the Pitris send him who, offered in thee, goes with our oblations.  
Wearing new life, let him approach his offspring, and splendid be invested with a body.

**Address to Yama. XVIII. 2.**

- 12 And those two dogs of thine, Yama, the watchers, four-eyed who look on men and guard the pathway,  
Entrust this man, O King, to their protection, and with prosperity and health endow him.

**Address to the Dead Husband. XVIII. 3.**

- 1 Choosing her husband's world, O man, this woman lays herself down beside thy lifeless body,  
Preserving faithfully the ancient custom. Bestow upon her here both wealth and offspring.

**Address to the Widow. XVIII. 3.**

- 2 Rise, come unto the world of life, O woman; come, he is  
lifeless by whose side thou liest.  
Wifehood with this thy husband was thy portion, who took thy  
hand and wooed thee as a lover.

It was an ancient custom among the Aryans before they entered India for the widow to be burned with the dead body of her husband. The widow in the hymn is supposed to lie down by the corpse on the funeral pile; but the husband's brother or some old friend makes her leave the body of the dead.

The second verse was mistranslated by the Brahmans to encourage widow burning, leading to untold deaths, that they might be enriched by the offerings on the occasion.

**Worship of Yama. XVIII. 3.**

- 13 Worship with sacrificial gift King Yama, Vivasván's son who  
gathers men together,  
Yama who was the first to die of mortals, the first who travelled  
to the world before us.

**Address to the Pitris. XVIII. 3.**

- 44 Fathers whom Agni's flames have tasted, come ye nigh : in perfect  
order take ye each your proper place.  
Eat sacrificial food presented on the grass : grant riches with a  
multitude of hero sons.

**Address to the Earth on the burial of the Remains. XVIII. 3.**

- 49 Betake thee to the lap of Earth, our mother, of Earth far-  
spreading, very kind and gracious.  
May she, wool-soft unto the guerdon-giver, guard thee in front  
upon the distant pathway.  
50 Heave, thyself, Earth, nor press him downward heavily : afford  
him easy access, pleasant to approach.  
Cover him as a mother wraps her skirt about her child, O  
Earth !

**CHARMS ABOUT WOMEN.**

The hymns on home life often refer to women. To point out one clearly the feeling regarding them, a few are quoted, supposed to be spoken by women themselves, or with which they are more especially concerned.

**A Maiden's Love Charm. VII. 38.**

The reference is to a plant whose powers are thus described :

- 1 I dig this healing Herb that makes my lover look on me and  
weep;  
That bids the parting friend return and kindly greets him as he  
comes.

- 2 With this same Herb I draw thee, close that I may be most dear to thee.
- 4 Thou shalt be mine and only mine, and never mention other dames.
- 5 If thou art far away beyond the rivers, far away from men, This Herb shall seem to bind thee fast and bring thee back my prisoner.

#### A Woman's Love Charm. VI. 130.

- 1 This is the Apsarases' love-spell, the conquering resistless ones! Send the spell forth, ye Deities! Let him consume with love of me.
- 2 I pray, may he remember me, think of me, loving and beloved. Send forth the spell, ye Deities! let him consume with love of me.
- 3 That he may think of me, that I may never, never think of him, Send forth the spell, ye Deities! Let him consume with love of me.
- 4 Madden him, Maruts, madden him. Madden him, madden him, O Air. Madden him, Agni, madden him. Let him consume with love of me.

#### A Charm to Win a Husband. VI. 60.

- 1 With forelock loosened o'er his brow here comes the wooer of the bride,  
Seeking a husband for this maid, a wife for this unmarried man.
- 2 Wooer! this girl hath toiled in vain, going to others' marriages. Now to her wedding, verily, wooer! another maid shall come.
- 3 Dhâtár upholds the spacious earth, upholds the sky, upholds the Sun.  
Dhâtár bestow upon this maid a husband suited to her wish!

NOTES:—The wooer is the matchmaker whose business it is to arrange marriages. Dhâtár is regarded as the upholder of the sacrament of marriage.

Hymn 36, Book II. is a charm to secure a husband for a marriageable girl.

#### MARRIAGE CEREMONIES.

#### A Nuptial Benediction. VI. 78.

- 1 Let this man be again bedewed with this presented sacrifice, And comfort with the sap of life the bride whom they have brought to him.
- 2 With life's sap let him comfort her, and raise her high with princely sway.  
In wealth that hath a thousand powers, this pair be inexhaustible!
- 3 Tvashtar formed her to be thy dame, Tvashtar made thee to be her lord.  
Long life let Tvashtar give you both. Let Tvashtar give a thousand lives.

**A nuptial Charm spoken by the Bride. VII. 37.**

With this my robe, inherited from Manu, I envelop thee,  
So that thou mayst be all mine own and give no thought to other  
dames.

**A Charm to be pronounced by Bride and Bridegroom. VII. 36.**

Sweet are the glances of our eyes, our faces are as smooth as balm.  
Within thy bosom harbour me; one spirit dwell in both of us!

NOTE.—The pair anoint each other's eyes as part of the marriage ceremony.

**Dignity of the Bride. XIV. 1.**

43 As vigorous Sindhu won himself imperial lordship of the  
streams,  
So be imperial queen when thou hast come within thy husband's home.

44 Over thy husband's fathers and his brothers be imperial queen,  
Over thy husband's sister and his mother bear supreme control.

**Gentleness enjoined on the Bride. XIV. 2.**

This shows conclusively that the bride was not a child subject  
her mother-in-law.

26 Bliss-bringer, furthering thy household's welfare, dear, glad-  
dening thy husband and his father, enter this home, mild to  
thy husband's mother.

27 Be pleasant to thy husband's sire, sweet to thy household and  
thy lord.

To all this clan be gentle, and favour these men's prosperity.

**Charm against Sterility and to assure the birth of Male Children. III. 23.**

Barrenness is what a wife most dreads. The birth of a son will  
secure her position.

1 From thee we banish and expel the cause of thy sterility.

This in another place we lay apart from thee and far removed.

2 As arrow to the quiver, so let a male embryo enter thee.

Then from thy side be born a babe, a ten-month child, thy  
hero son.

3 Bring forth a male, bring forth a son. Another male shall  
follow him.

The mother shalt thou be of sons born and hereafter to be born.

6 May those celestial herbs whose sire was Heaven, the Earth their  
mother, and their root the ocean,

May those celestial healing Plants assist thee to obtain a son.

**The Birth of a Daughter Deprecated. VI. 11.**

1 Asvattha on the Sami-tree. There a male birth is certified.

There is the finding of a son : this bring we to the women-folk.



- 2 The father sows the genial seed, the woman tends and fosters it.  
This is the finding of a son : thus hath Prajapati declared.
- 3 Prajapati, Anumati, Siniváli have ordered it.  
Elsewhere may he effect the birth of maids, but here prepare a boy.

NOTE.—The Asvattha, masculine, growing on the Sami-tree, feminine, is typical of a male child. Prajapati, Lord of life, was invoked on such occasions. Anumati and Siniváli were deities presiding over childbirth.

### Charms against Jealousy.

Hymn 45, Book VII. contains a Charm to "calm a lover's Jealousy." Hymn 18, Book VI., "A Charm to banish Jealousy," is quoted below :

- 1 The first approach of Jealousy, and that which followeth the first,  
The pain, the fire that burns within thy heart, we quench and drive away.
- 2 Even as the earth is dead to sense, yea, more unconscious than the dead,  
Even as a corpse's spirit is the spirit of the jealous man.
- 3 The thought that harbours in thy heart, the fluttering doubt that dwells therein,  
Yea, all thy jealousy, like heat born of the dance, I banish thence.

### Imprecation on an Unfaithful Lover. VI. 138.

- 1 O Plant, thy fame is spread abroad as best of all the herbs that grow.  
Unman for me to-day this man that he may wear the horn of hair.
- 2 Make him a eunuch with a horn, set thou the crest upon his head.  
Let Indra with two pressing-stones deprive him of his manly strength.
- 3 I have unmanned thee, eunuch ! yea, impotent ! made thee impotent, and robbed thee, weakling ! of thy strength.  
Upon his head we set the horn, we set the branching ornament.

NOTES.—*The Horn of hair*, regarded as a mark of effeminacy. Verses 4 & 5 are so indecent as to be untranslatable in English.

### A Spell to rid a jealous wife of a more favoured Rival.

#### III. 18.

Polygamy seems to have prevailed to some extent. Book VII. contains two Hymns, Nos. 113, 114 ; with spells of this description. Hymn 18, Book III is quoted below :

- 1 From out the earth I dig this Plant, an herb of most effectual power,  
Wherewith one quells the rival wife, and gains the husband for one's self.

- 2 Auspicious, with expanded leaves, sent by the Gods, victorious Plant,

Drive thou the rival wife away, and make my husband only mine.

- 3 Indeed he hath not named her name; thou with this husband dalliest not.

Far into distance most remote we drive the rival wife away.

- 4 Stronger am I, O stronger one, yea, mightier than the mightier; Beneath me be my rival wife, down, lower than the lowest dames!

- 5 I am the conqueror, and thou, thou also art victorious:

As victory attends us both we will subdue my fellow-wife.

- 6 I've girt thee with the conquering Plant, beneath thee laid the mightiest one.

As a cow hastens to her calf, so let thy spirit speed to me, hasten like water on its way.

NOTE.—The hymn is taken, with variations, from Rig-Veda X. 145. The plant is supposed to be a climbing plant, employed for magical purposes.

**Incantation against evil spirits that beset women.**—Hymn 6, Book XIV. gives a long account of demons supposed to molest women.

## THE GODS OF THE ATHARVA-VEDA.

The deities invoked are much the same as in the Rig-Veda. The principal will be briefly noticed, with illustrative quotations.

**Agni.**—This god, to whom the first hymn of the Rig-Veda is addressed, occupies the foremost place in the Atharva-Veda. There are more references to him than to any other deity. He is addressed in his various forms. He is ordinary fire, the sacred household fire. A prayer is offered to him to protect a house against fire. As lightning, Agni springs from the clouds. He is repeatedly invoked as the Sun. Agni is the fiend-slayer, the special tutelary deity of the five tribes of Aryan men; the giver of wealth, the giver of children; the lord of the seasons. He is the Hotar priest, the sacrificer. Lastly, as flesh-consumer, he is the fire of the funeral pile.

*Játavedas*, the wise, the sapient, and *Vaisvánara*, belonging to all (Aryan) men, universal;—are two epithets frequently applied to Agni.

Hymn 64, Book XIX., quoted below, is a prayer to Agni for children and long life, which he is asked to give in return for the food burnt in his honour.

- 1 For lofty *Játavedas* I have brought the fuel hither first.

May he who knoweth all bestow faith and intelligence on me.

- 2 With fuel and with flaming wood we, *Játavedas*, strengthen thee;

So do thou strengthen us in turn with children and with store of wealth.

- 3 Whatever even be the logs which, Agni, we lay down for thee, Propitious be it all to me: accept it, O most youthful God.

- 4 Agni, these logs are thine; with these be, fain to burn!  
flaming brand.

Vouchsafe us length of life and give us hope of immortality.

Hymn 21, Book III. in honour of all varieties of fire, is especially a charm to appease Agni in his most dreaded form, and to quench the flames of the funeral pile. It ends as follows:

- 4 The all-devouring God whom men call Kâma, he whom they  
call the Giver and Receiver,  
Invincible, pervading, wise, and mighty—to all these Fires be this  
oblation offered.

**Indra.**—As in the Rig-Veda, Indra occupies a very prominent place. The references to him are next in number to those of Agni. Numerous epithets are applied to him; as the Soma-drinker, the Fiend-slayer, the Mighty Bull, the Conqueror, the Thunderer, the Destroyer, the Giver of Bliss, &c. He is invoked with his thunderbolts, to put to flight the demons of the air and set free the rain, that it may descend in torrents. Alone, or in conjunction with Agni, he is asked to destroy all other demons. His aid is likewise specially solicited in battle, for success against enemies. Plenteous wealth, long life, and numerous sons are other gifts which he is asked to bestow.

As already mentioned, the whole of Book XX., with the exception of the Kuntâpa section, is almost exclusively devoted to the praise of Indra. Both it and other hymns to Indra are mostly taken from the Rig-Veda.

Hymn 8, Book XX., in praise of Indra, is as follows:

- 1 Drink as of old, and let the draught delight thee:  
Hear thou my prayer and let our songs exalt thee.  
Make the Sun visible, make food abundant: slaughter the foe  
pierce through and free the cattle
- 2 Come to us; they have called thee Soma-lover.  
Here is the pressed juice, drink thereof for rapture.  
Widely-capacious, pour it down within thee, and invoked hear  
us like a father.
- 8 Fall is his chalice. Blessing! Like a pourer I have filled up  
the vessel for his drinking,  
Presented on the right, dear Soma juices have brought us Indra  
to rejoice him, hither.

NOTES.—Taken from Rig-Veda. *The cattle*, the clouds which are to be dispersed

**Heaven and Earth.**—Dyaus, heaven, denotes the bright sky itself, the old Dyaus, worshipped as we know by the Aryans before they broke up into separate peoples, and languages, and surviving in Greece as Zeus, in Italy as Jupiter, and among the Teutonic nations as *Tyr* or *Tiu*.\*

\* *India: What can it teach us?* p. 194.

*Prithivi*, the Earth, literally 'the wide,' 'the extended,' was early associated with *Dyaus*. Originally they were closely united. In *Rig-Veda* I. 67 *Agni* is said to have separated them and fixed them in their present position; but in other parts of the *Rig-Veda* this action is ascribed to *Indra*, to *Varuna*, to *Soma*, etc. Lang says in *Custom and Myth*, that this old surviving nature myth of the original union and subsequent forcible separation of heaven and earth is found in Greece, China, and New Zealand, as well as in India.

There are numerous reference to Heaven and Earth personified in the *Atharva-Veda*. In Hymn 26, Book IV. the refrain is:

Deliver us, ye twain, from grief and trouble.

Hymn 1, Book XII., containing 63 verses, consists of praise and prayer addressed to *Prithivi*.

**Varuna.**—There are frequent reference to this deity, the only one to whom moral qualities are specially assigned. His name means the 'coverer' or 'encompasser'; originally the visible starry heavens.

In later times he was connected with the terrestrial ocean and the waters of the earth, and regarded as their presiding deity.

Max Müller says: "This god is one of the most interesting creations of the Hindu mind, because though we can still perceive the physical background from which he rises, the vast, starry brilliant expanse above, his features more than those of any of the *Vedic* gods, have become completely transfigured, and he stands before us as a god who watches over the world, punishes the evil-doer, and ever forgives the sin of those who implore his pardon."\*

*Varuna* is especially the moral governor of the world; "viewing men's righteous and unrighteous dealing, seizing evil-doers in his noose and punishing them."

Hymn 16, Book IV. celebrates the omnipresence and omniscience of *Varuna*; but concludes with an imprecation on an enemy. The last verse may be an addition. *Both the oceans*, denote the ocean of air, and the ocean of water.

- 1 The mighty Ruler of these worlds beholds as though from close at hand

The man who thinks he acts by stealth; all this the Gods perceive and know.

- 2 If a man stands or walks or moves in secret, goes to his lying-down or his uprising,

What two men whisper as they sit together, King *Varuna* knows: he as the third is present.

- 3 This earth, too, is King *Varuna's* possession, and the high heaven whose ends are far asunder.

The loins of *Varuna* are both the oceans, and this small drop of water, too, contains him.

---

\* *India, What can it Teach us?* p. 195.

- 4 If one should flee afar beyond the heaven, King Varuna would still be round about him.  
Proceeding hither from the sky his envoys look, thousand-eyed over the earth beneath them.
- 5 All this the royal Varuna beholdeth, all between heaven and earth and all beyond them.  
The twinklings of men's eyelids hath he counted. As one who plays throws dice he settles all things.
- 6 Those fatal snares of thine which stand extended, threefold, (Varuna, seven by seven,  
May they all catch the man who tells a falsehood, and pass unharmed the man whose words are truthful.
- 7 Varuna, snare him with a hundred nooses! Man's watcher! let not him who lies escape thee.  
There let the villain sit with hanging belly and bandaged like a cask whose hoops are broken.
- 8 Varuna sends, and drives away, diseases: Varuna is both native and a stranger,  
Varuna is celestial and is human.
- 9 I bind and hold thee fast with all these nooses, thou son of such a man and such a mother.  
All these do I assign thee as thy portion.

**Savitar.**—This god takes an important place in the Atharva-Veda. His title is derived from *su*, to beget. He is regarded as a generative power, sometimes identified with, sometimes distinguished from Súra. He is especially the morning sun whose light drives away witches and evil spirits. The celebrated Gáyatri is addressed to Savitar. It is supposed to exert magical powers.

Tat Savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi |  
dhiyo yo nah prachodayát | R. V. iii. 62, 10.

It has been variously translated. Griffith renders it thus:

“May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the god:  
So may he stimulate our prayers.”

Wilson says that it was “in its original use, a simple invocation of the sun to shed a benignant influence upon the customary offices of worship.” The Skanda Purana extols it as “Vishnu, Brahma, Siva, and the Three Vedas.”

In Hymn 4, Book XIII., quoted below, Savitar is praised as comprehending in himself all other divinities, as the only divinity

- 1 Down looking on the ridge of sky, Savitar goes to highest heaven
- 2 To misty cloud filled with his rays Mahendra goes encompassed round.
- 3 Creator and Ordainer, he is Váyu, he is lifted cloud.
- 4 Rudra and Mahádeva, he is Aryaman and Varuna.
- 5 Agni is he and Súra, he is verily Maháyama.
- 11 He keepeth watch o'er creatures, all that breatheth and that breatheth not.

- 12 This conquering might hath entered him. He is the sole, the simple One, the One alone.  
 18 In him these Deities become simple and One.  
 32 He was produced from Wind; and Wind derives his origin from him.  
 33 From Heaven was he produced; and Heaven derives his origin from him.  
 55 Worship to thee whom all behold ! Regard me, thou whom all regard,  
 56 With food, and fame, and vigour, with the splendour of a Brahman's rank.

**Soma.**—The references to Soma as the god, the juice of the plant, and the moon, are very numerous. The plant was formerly supposed to be a milky climbing plant (*Asclepias acida*) ; it is now identified with a species of Ephedra, which in the Harirud valley is said to bear the name of *hum*, *huma*, and *yahma*.\*

PAVAMANA denotes the deified Soma as it passes through the purifying filter.

Soma is the god of plants, they being supposed to thrive specially under the influence of the moon.

In Hymn 96, Book VI. the many plants that Soma rules as King, are asked to deliver the suppliants from grief and woe. He himself is asked to cleanse them from sin.

- 1 The many plants of hundred shapes and forms that Soma, rules as King,  
 Commanded by Brihaspati, deliver us from grief and woe !
- \* 2 Let them release me from the curse and from the noose of Varuna,  
 Free me from Yama's fetter, and from every sin against the gods !
- 3 From every fault in look, in word, or spirit that we, awake or sleeping, have committed,  
 May Soma, with his godlike nature, cleanse us.

**Ushas.**—The Dawn, the morning light personified, is several times mentioned. Bhaga, conqueror in the morning, as the early sun overpowers Ushas, called his sister. Ushas is also called the daughter of Prajapati whom he wished to marry, a proceeding which shocked the gods. Rig-Veda X. 61. 5-8. This was understood literally, but Kumarila explained it as only meaning that at sunrise, the sun runs after the dawn. In Hymn 12, Book XIX, noted below, she is asked for wealth and long life :

Dawn drives away her sister's gloom, and through her excellence makes her retrace her path  
 Through her may we gain god-appointed treasure, and with brave sons be glad through hundred winters.

**Pushan.**—The name is derived from *push*, to nourish. As a god he protects and multiplies cattle and human possessions

generally. As a form of the Sun, he beholds the entire universe. Travellers especially pray to him for protection.

Hymn 9, Book VII. is as follows :

- 1 Pûshan was born to move on distant pathways, on roads remote from earth, remote from heaven.  
To both most lovely places of assembly he travels and returns with perfect knowledge.
- 2 Pûshan knows all these realms : may he conduct us by ways that are most free from fear and danger.  
Giver of blessings, glowing, all heroic, may he the wise and watchful go before us.
- 3 We are thy praisers here, O Pûshan : never let us be injured under thy protection.
- 4 From out the distance, far and wide, may Pûshan stretch his right hand forth.  
Let him drive back our lost to us, let us return with what is lost.

**Vāyu.**—There are several references to Vāyu, the god of Wind, a deity of the middle region of the air. He refreshes the cattle and drives off the flies. He is one of the eight Lokapālas or world-protectors who preside over the eight points of the compass. He is praised as the god of the air which supports life.

Vāyu is invoked in several hymns, and Hymn 4, Book VII. is specially addressed to him. Its repetition three times concludes the ceremony of blessing the horses.

With thine eleven teams to aid our wishes, yea, with thy two and-twenty teams, O Vāyu,  
With all thy three-and-thirty teams for drawing, here loose these teams, thou who art prompt to listen !

**Skambha.**—Hymn 7, Book X, is a glorification of the Supreme Deity embodied, under this name, the Pillar or Support of all existence. On him Prajapati set up and established all the worlds. In his body are contained all three-and-thirty deities. He is called "the Unborn," "the highest Brahman"; but he is also identified with Indra.

It is a long hymn containing 44 verses. The following are some quotations.

- 7 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
On whom Prajapati set up and firmly established all the worlds
- 8 That universe which Prajapati created, wearing all forms, the highest, midmost, lowest,  
How far did Skambha penetrate within it ? What portion did he leave unpenetrated ?
- 13 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha,  
He in whose body are contained all three-and-thirty Deities ?
- 14 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
In whom the Sages earliest born, the Richas, Sáman, Yajus, Earth and the one highest Sage abide ?

- 15 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
Who comprehendeth, for mankind, both immortality and death,  
He who containeth for mankind the gathered waters, as his  
veins ?
- 20 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
From whom they hewed the Richas off, from whom they chipped  
the Yajus, he  
Whose hairs are Sâma-verses, and his mouth the Atharvângirases ?
- 39 Who out of many, tell me, is that Skambha  
To whom the Deities with hands, with feet, and voice, and ear,  
and eye  
Present unmeasured tribute in the measured hall of sacrifice ?

**The Unknown God.**—Hymn 2, Book IV. is taken, with some variations, from Rig-Veda, X. 121. After each verse the question is asked, "What God shall we adore with our oblation ?" *Ka*, who, as adopted as the name of a god. "Worship we *Ka*, the god, with our oblation."

- 1 Giver of breath, giver of strength and vigour, he whose commandment all the Gods acknowledge,  
He who is Lord of this, of man and cattle :—What God shall we adore with our oblation ?
- 2 Who by his grandeur hath become sole ruler of all the moving world that breathes and slumbers,  
Whose shade is death, whose lustre makes immortal :—  
What God shall we adore with our oblation ?
- 3 To whom both hosts embattled, look with longing, and Heaven and Earth invoke him in their terror ;  
Whose is this path that measures out the region :—  
What God shall we adore with our oblation ?
- 4 Whose is the mighty earth and spacious heaven, and yonder ample firmament between them,  
Whose is yon Sun extended in his grandeur :—  
What God shall we adore with our oblation ?
- 5 Whose, through his might, are all the Snowy Mountains, and whose, they say is Rasâ in the ocean,  
The arms of whom are these celestial quarters :—  
What God shall we adore with our oblation ?
- 6 The deathless Waters, born in Law, receiving, protected all the germ in the beginning,—  
Waters divine who had the God above them :—  
What God shall we adore with our oblation ?
- 7 In the beginning rose Hiranyagarbha, even at his birth sole Lord of all creation.  
He fixt and firmly established earth and heaven :—  
What God shall we adore with our oblation ?
- 8 In the beginning, generating offspring, the Waters brought an embryo into being ;  
And even as it sprang to life it had a covering of gold.



**Purusha.**—The subject of Hymn 2, Book X, is "Púrusha, the Primeval Man, or Humanity Personified. In stanzas 16 and 18 quoted below, he is identified with Brahma, the Phenomena Creator.

- 1 Who framed the heels of Púrusha ? who fashioned the flesh of him? Who formed and fixed his ankles ?  
Who made the openings and well-moulded fingers ? Who gave him foot-soles and a central station ?
- 4 Who and how many were those gods who fastened the chest of Púrusha and neck together ?  
How many fixed his breasts ? Who formed his elbows ? How many joined together ribs and shoulders ?
- 16 Through whom did he spread waters out, through whom did he make Day to shine.  
Through whom did he enkindle Dawn and give the gift of eventide ?
- 18 Through whom did he bedeck the earth, through whom did he encompass heaven ?  
Whose might made Púrusha surpass the mountains and create things ?

Hymn 6, Book XIX, is taken, with some variations, from Rig Veda X. 90, known as the Púrusha-Sukta, a pantheistic hymn in which the four castes are mentioned :

- 1 Purusha hath a thousand arms, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side pervading earth he fills a space ten fingers wide.
- 2 He with three quarters rose to heaven : here reappeared a fourth of him.  
Thence he strode forth on every side to all that eats not and that eats.
- 3 So mighty is his grandeur, yea, greater than this is Purusha. All creatures are one-fourth of him, three-fourths what dieth not in heaven.
- 4 Purusha is in truth this All, what hath been and what yet shall be—  
Lord, too, of immortality—and what hath grown with some what else.
- 5 When they divided Purusha how many portions did they make? What was his mouth ? What were his arms ? What are the names of thighs and feet ?
- 6 The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanyá made.  
His waist became the Vaisya, from his feet the Sudra was produced.
- 7 The Moon was gendered from his mind, and from his eye the Sun had birth.  
Indra and Agni from his mouth were born, and Váyu from his breath.

puranas are Hindu Rajas, with their tastes and surroundings, but possessed of superhuman powers.

Cicero, a celebrated Roman, says of his countrymen and the Greeks, "Instead of the transfer to man of that which is divine, they transferred human sins to their gods and experienced again the necessary action."

Any book attributing evil passions to God shows that it was not inspired by Him, but proceeded from the imagination of an evil heart. Brahma is regarded as the Creator, but in the sacred books of the Hindus themselves he is charged with lying, drunkenness, and lust: his conduct was considered so vile, that he was deprived of all worship. Vishnu and Siva are considered the greatest of the gods; but the story of Mohini alone makes one regard their whole history as a wicked invention. The same remark applies to Krishna as described in the Bhagavata Purana. The conduct of the Vallabhacháris shows its pernicious influence.

But educated Hindus now generally admit that the tales in the Puranas are fictions; they adopt as their ideal the Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita, and claim him as Supreme. For a full consideration of his character the reader is referred to the treatise mentioned below.\*

It is fully admitted that the Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita stands on a far higher level than the Krishna of the Puranas. The poem is exquisitely composed, and expresses some noble sentiments. Nevertheless, an examination of it shows that it was written by a Vaishnava Brahman, who had the ordinary Hindu polytheistic and atheistic ideas, who sought to uphold caste and the privileges of his order, while he endeavoured to harmonise some doctrines of Hindu philosophy, and give prominence to Krishna *bhakti*. A blasphemous claim is made that "the Deity" spoke the words which he wrote, and the book was foisted into the Mahábhárata to get the support of its authority.

The Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita, like the Krishna of the Bhagavata Purana, had no existence. His worship and that of the other Hindu gods is not merely useless but sinful, for it is giving them the honour due to the one true God, the Creator and Preserver of the Universe.

2. The belief in Magic and Witchcraft proves that the Atharva-Veda is not a Divine revelation.—It has already been shown that such superstitions are characteristic of rude tribes. The Atharva-Veda has been called the "Cursing Veda" from its many charms, supposed to cause the destruction of enemies. Bloomfield says that the "most salient teaching of the Atharva-

---

\* *The Bhagavad Gita*, with an English Translation, Explanatory Notes, and an examination of its Doctrines. 8vo. 108 pp. 4 As. Post-free, 5 As. Sold by Mr. A. T. Gott, Tract Depot, Madras.

Veda is sorcery," (p. 7.) All this shows that the Veda did not proceed from God, but is the production of men in a rude state of civilization.

**Other Sacred Books of the Hindus.**—The Vedas were followed by the BRAHMANAS, the Brahmanas by the UPANISHADS, the foundation of the Vedānta Philosophy. The BHAGAVAD GITA tried to combine philosophical systems, in order to remove some of the objections to which they were liable. The PURANAS are still more modern, each written in praise of some particular deity.

Full accounts of these different works, with English translations in whole or in part, are given in the Series entitled THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE EAST DESCRIBED AND EXAMINED, a list of which is appended.

### THE TRUE VEDA.

The Hindu Śāstras describe the earth as consisting of a vast central mountain, called Meru, surrounded by seven continents and seven seas. It does not follow because this account of the earth is wrong, that there is no true Geography. In like manner, although the four Vedas of the Hindus are not true revelations, such a revelation may exist. The most enlightened nations of the world believe that this true revelation to be found in the Bible, of which a short account will now be given.

Although the Bible is often bound in a single volume, it consists of 66 different books, written at widely different periods in the history of the world. God, at "sundry times and in divers manners" made known His will to men. The Bible is the history of the Divine education of the human race, from its childhood to its manhood. The different books were given as they were needed; step by step, man was led upwards in moral and religious progress.

The first sentence of the Bible contains a great truth, never discovered by the wisdom of man: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." To create is to make out of nothing. Hindus think that as a man cannot do this, neither can God. They imagine therefore that the universe was formed out of pre-existing material, called *prakṛiti*. The Bible teaches that God by His almighty power, called the world into existence, and that it was gradually made fit for the abode of man.

Hinduism asserts that souls are as eternal as Brahma himself. The Bible teaches that we were made by God. He is our Father by creation. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" Christianity teaches us to address God as our "Father in heaven." It is true that we have been disobedient, rebellious children, but we are earnestly invited to return, asking forgiveness.

The ancestors of Europeans and Aryan Hindus once worshipped the same God under the same name, *Dyaush-Pitar*, Heaven-Father.

"Thousands of years have passed away since the Aryan nations started to travel to the North and the South, the West and the East: they have each formed their languages, they have each founded empires and philosophies, they have each built temples and razed them to the ground; they have all grown older, and it may be wiser and better; but they search for a name for that which is most exalted and yet so dear to every one of us, when they wish to express both awe and adoration, the infinite and the finite, they can but do what their old fathers did when gazing up to the eternal sky, and feeling the presence of a Being as far and as near as near can be; they can but combine the self-same words and utter once more the primeval Aryan prayer, Heaven-her, in that form which will endure for ever, 'Our Father, which art in heaven.'"

But the Bible tells us that although God is our Father in heaven, we have been ungrateful, disobedient children. God says, one of His prophets: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth its owner and ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

We may be compared to children who have left their father's house to live among wicked companions. The Bible says that there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not; "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We are in thought as well as in word and deed. The best men have the deepest sense of their own sinfulness.

"The wages of sin is death." The whole human race is liable to this penalty. God, in His great love, devised a plan by which man may be saved from the punishment and power of sin.

All through the history of the world there has been the hope of a Saviour who would deliver it from the evil which oppresses it. The generations of man, weak and helpless in themselves, have ever been looking after ONE in whom they may find all they need for vainly in themselves and in those around them.

The Hindu ideas of incarnation are well-known. Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita: "Whosoever religion fades and irreligion prevails, then I produce myself." The expectation is general that at the close of the Kali Yuga, the Kalki *avatāra* will come, an incarnation of Vishnu, on a white horse, will destroy the wicked, and restore the earth to its original purity. These ideas, though different, recognise the hope of God descending to the level of the fallen creature and becoming man to lighten the burden of pain and misery under which the universe is groaning.

The Bible teaches that God became incarnate as Jesus Christ for our redemption. He perfectly fulfilled the laws which we had broken, and by His death on the cross He made an atonement for

sin. Salvation is now freely offered to all who accept Him true as their Saviour, and strive to follow His example.

A general account of Christianity is given in the two little books mentioned below :

*Short Papers for Seekers after Truth.* 12mo. 104 pp. 1 An.

*Elements of Christian Truth.* 12mo. 71 pp. 1½ An. A series of lectures by the Rev. Dr. Murray Mitchell.

A full account of the wonderful history of the Lord Jesus Christ is given in the New Testament. A Hindu had best begin with the *Gospel of Luke*, which was first written for a convert. A copy of it may be obtained for half an anna at any Bible Depot. There is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke, by the same author, called *The Acts of the Apostles*, describing the early history of the Christian Church.

To assist in the study of these two books of Scripture, a little work, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, has been published. Besides an Introduction to the two books, it contains two coloured Maps and an explanatory Vocabulary of words presenting any difficulty. Price 1½ An. Post-free, 2 As.

The *New Testament* may form the next study. English editions may be obtained at prices varying from 1 to 4 An. An introduction to its study, called *The Founder of Christianity*, intended specially for Indian students, is sold at 4 As. post-free. The vernacular edition of the Scriptures would be helpful to many in understanding their meaning. The complete Bible may afterwards be studied, and even during the whole course portions of may be read, especially the Psalms.

**Evidences of Christianity.**—There is an excellent manual on this subject by the Rev. Dr. Murray Mitchell, *Letters to Indian Youth on the Evidences of Christianity.*—12mo., 280 pp., price 6 As. post-free.

**Prayer for Light.**—One of the greatest helps to arrive at religious truth is to seek it earnestly from our Father in heaven. The following short prayer may be offered :

“O all-wise, all-merciful God and Father, pour the bright beams of Thy light into my soul, and guide me into Thy eternal truth.”

The following longer prayer has been attributed to Augustine, one of the greatest early Christian writers :

“O Lord, who art the Light, the Way, the Truth, the Life; whom there is no darkness, error, vanity, nor death; the Light, without which there is darkness; the Way, without which there is wandering; the truth, without which there is error; the Life, without which there is death; say, lord, ‘Let there be light,’ and I shall see light and escape darkness; I shall see the way and avoid wandering; I shall see the truth and shun error; I shall see life and escape death. Illumine my O illuminate my blind soul, which sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death: and direct my feet in the way of peace.”

SACRED BOOKS OF THE EAST EXAMINED & DESCRIBED.

---

# THE BRAHMANAS OF THE VEDAS.

BY

K. S. MACDONALD, M.A., D.D.,

AUTHOR OF *The Vedic Religion*, EDITOR *Indian Evangelical Review*, &c.

---

FIRST EDITION, 2,000 COPIES.

---

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA.

LONDON AND MADRAS.



## P R E F A C E .

The Veda consists of three series of works, each series having at least four different works. The first of these three is known as the Hymns or *Sanhitas*, the second as *Brahmanas* or ritual, and the third as *Upanishads* or philosophical treatises. In the market various works may be found treating of the Hymns, with side glances at the *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads*. The author's "Vedic Religion" is one of these. Various works are also published on the *Upanishads*. The present volume is the only work on the *Brahmanas* in English in any other language as far as the writer has been able to discover. It may have a special interest of their own.

The volume is written by one who has had 34 years' personal and direct knowledge of the people who venerate these *Brahmanas*. In these years he has lived in their midst in close fellowship with them, and many of them are among his most intimate friends. He has written in full sympathy with the ancient Aryans of India as well as with modern Hindus.

The writer admits that among other imperfections of his book there is followed no system of transliterating Sanskrit words. To do so would require more time and thought than he could feel justified in giving, having respect to his other labours. He however believes that his effort to open up the *Brahmanas* to his fellow-missionaries is a truly missionary work. Prof. Max Müller, in quoting passages, such as are found in this volume, says—"I could add other passages, particularly from the *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads*, all confirming Father Calmette's idea that the Veda is the best key to the religion of India, and that a thorough knowledge of it, of its strong as well as of its weak points, is indispensable to the student of religion, and more particularly to the missionary who is anxious to make sincere converts." *Physical Religion*, p. 45.

In compiling the *Brahmanas of the Vedas* no point has been left over because it was strong or weak has been omitted.



because of its beauty. The interesting, the instructive and suggestive have all been brought together so far as space permitted, and all referred to the original chapter and verse. Our endeavour has been "not simply to refrain from injustice of word or deed, but also to do justice by an open recognition of positive worth."

I adopt the words of Dr. John Muir in his Preface to Vol. of his *Sanskrit Texts*:—"The book (as will at once be apparent to the oriental scholar) is, for the most part, either a compilation at the least founded on the labours of others; but while my principal aim has been to furnish the reader with a summary of results of preceding enquiries, my plan has, at the same time rendered it necessary for me occasionally to institute fresh searches in different directions for the elucidation of particular points which were touched upon in the course of my argument. In this way I may have contributed a small proportion of original matter to the discussion of some of the interesting topics which have come under review."

The student, to obtain the whole information, the volume fitted and intended to give, must make large use of the Index. For example, in studying *Indra* or *Agni*, it is not enough to master that is given under these names in the chapter treating of "Gods of the Brahmanas," the student must look to the Index and turn up all the pages there referred to under *Indra* and *Agni*.

I am under special obligation to the five vols. of Dr. himself, to the works of Eggeling, Haug, Max Müller, Dr. Mitra, Weber, Barth, Dr. K. M. Banerjea, Whitney, Hopkins, M. Williams, Burnell, Hillebrandt, Colebrooke, Goreh, and too numerous to mention.

---

The translation of the SATAPATHA BRAHMANA, by Julius Eggeling, "*Sacred Books of the East*," deserves special mention: 3 vols. each Clarendon Press.

# CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
IAP. I.—Introductory ... ..	1
II.— I. Rig-Veda Brahmanas . . . . .	12
II. Sama Veda do. . . . .	16
III. Black Yajur Veda do. . . . .	28
IV. White do. do. do. . . . .	32
V. Atharva Veda do. . . . .	36
III.—Nature, Contents and Authors of the Brahmanas..	39
IV.—Religion of the Brahmanas . . . . .	44
V.—Human Sacrifices . . . . .	46
VI.—The Cow and Bovine Sacrifices . . . . .	59
VIII.—Horse Sacrifices . . . . .	70
IX.—Prayer . . . . .	74
X.—Creation of Man and Origin of Caste . . . . .	80
XI.—Story of the Deluge . . . . .	90
XII.—Future Life . . . . .	92
XIII.—The Gods of the Brahmanas . . . . .	102
XIV.—The Science of the Rishis . . . . .	140
XV.—Natural History . . . . .	151
XVI.—Drunkenness . . . . .	167
XVII.—Women . . . . .	173
VIII.—Meaning of Sacrifice . . . . .	179
XIX.—Sin, its Penances and Cure . . . . .	183
XX.—Conclusion . . . . .	194
Index . . . . .	200



# THE BRAHMANAS OF THE VEDAS.\*

## CHAPTER I.

The Temple at Jerusalem was divided, like the Tabernacle before it, into a holy and a most holy place. So the sacred literature of the Hindus is classified into two orders of origin and authority. The former being called *Smṛiti* and the latter *Śruti* or Veda. The word *Śruti* means what is *heard*. It is regarded as what was eternally existing, and in time only seen or heard by the sages, not composed nor arranged by them. It is thus a divine revelation in the highest and fullest sense of the term.

Yet the Taittiriya Brahmana (iii. 39. 1) speaks of the Veda as being "the hair of Prajapati's beard," which implies a process of formation and consequently scarcely eternal. So also in the same Brahmana (ii. 3.10.1)—"Prajapati created King Soma. After him the three Vedas were created." Elsewhere in the same Brahmana (ii. 8.8.5), Vach is called 'the mother of the Vedas.' A text in the Satapatha Brahmana (vii. 5.2.52) may be regarded as throwing light on this. It runs, as translated by Dr. Muir:—

"Mind is the ocean. From the mind-ocean, with speech for a shovel, the gods dug out the Triple Vedic science (*i.e.*, the three Vedas). Hence this verse has been uttered: 'May the brilliant deity to-day know where they are digging that offering which the gods dug out with sharp shovels.' Mind is the ocean. Speech is the sharp shovel; the triple Vedic science is the offering. In reference to this the verse has been uttered. 'He settles it in mind.'"

Still, with no bated breath, do the same Brahmanas proclaim the supreme authority of the Vedas. The Taittiriya Brahmana (ii. 12.9.1) connects all form, motion and heat or brilliancy with the three Vedas, and in the Satapatha Brahmana we read:—

"Prajapati beheld all beings in this triple Vedic science. For in it is the fulfilment of all metres, of all hymns of praise, of all breaths of all the gods. This indeed exists. This is that which is mortal. Prajapati reflected, 'All beings comprehended in the triple Vedic science: come let me dispose myself in the shape of the triple Vedic science.' He arranged the verses of the Rig-Veda.

\* Large portions of the Brahmanas cannot with comfort be read consecutively. We give a good many extracts, which, throughout, will be printed in smaller type. By thus, by means of numerous extracts, can the reader fully realise the character of the works which are being described and examined in this booklet. We may here anticipate so far as to give the names of the existing Brahmanas, from which our quotations will be made. They are the *Āitareya* and *Sankhayana*, connected with the Rig-Veda; the *Tanāya*, or *Panchavimsa*, *Shadvimsa*, *Chhandogya* and others connected with the Sama-Veda; the *Taittiriya* with the Black Yajur-Veda; the *Satapatha* with the White Yajur-Veda; and the *Gopātha* with the Atharva Veda.

Twelve-thousand Brihatīs, and as many Rik verses which were created by Prajapati, stood in rows in the thirtieth class. Since they stood in the thirtieth class there are thirty nights in the month.\*

As a parallel to the above and to much of the reasonings in the Brahmanas, we refer our readers to the pages of *Alice in Wonderland* and extract the following sample :—

"And how many hours a day did you do lessons?" said Alice to change the subject. "Ten hours the first day," said the Mock Turtle, "nine the next, and so on." "What a curious plan!" exclaimed Alice. "That's the reason they're called lessons" the Gryphon remarked, "because they lessen from day to day." This was quite a new idea to Alice, and she thought over a little before she made her next remark—"Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?" "Of course it was," said the Mock Turtle. "And how did you manage on the twelfth?" Alice went on eagerly. "That is enough about lessons," the Gryphon interrupted in a very decided tone, "tell her something about games now."

Such reasonings in the Brahmanas frequently end with the remark—"The gods love the mystic" or mysterious.

The following account of the origin of the Vedas is taken from the Satapatha Brahmana (xi. 5. 8. 1 ff) :—

"Prajapati was formerly this universe (*i. e.*, the sole existence), one only. He desired—'May I become, may I be propagated.' He toiled in devotion, performed austerity. From him, when he had so toiled, and performed austerity, three worlds were created,—earth, air and sky. He infused warmth into these three worlds. From them thus heated, three lights were produced,—Agni (fire), this which purifies *i. e.* Pavana, or Vāyu (the wind) and Sūrya (the sun). He infused heat into these three lights. From them so heated the three Vedas were produced,—the Rig-Veda from Agni, Yajur-Veda from Vāyu, and the Sāma-Veda from Sūrya. He infused warmth into these three Vedas. From them so heated three luminous essences were produced, *bhūh* from the Rig-Veda, *bhuvah* from the Yajur-Veda and *svah* from the Sāma-Veda. Hence with the Rig-Veda they performed the function of the *hotri*; with the Yajur-Veda, the office of the *adhvaryu*; with the Sāma-Veda, the duty of the *udgatri*; while the function of the *Brahman* is through the luminous essence of the triple science [*i. e.*, the three Vedas combined.]"\*

Another account given in the same Brahmana, vi. 1. 1. 8 scarcely consistent with the above.

"Now this person, Prajapati, desired, 'May I be more (than one); let me be reproduced!' He toiled, he practised austerity. Being worn out with toil and austerity, he created, first of all the Brahman (neut.), the science. It became to him a foundation: hence they say 'The Brahman' (*i. e.* the science) is the foundation of every thing here.'" (vi. 1. 1. 8.)

• In both passages Prajapati is represented as creating great labour the Vedas, yet how very different the order of creation. Well may Dr. John Muir notice (Vol. iii. p. 7.) "some inconsistency" in the different accounts.

\* *Bhūh*, *bhuvah* and *svah* are, after *Om*, the most sacred words in Hinduism. *Hotri*, *Adhvaryu*, *Udgatri* and *Brahman* are the three great classes of priests in the Brahmanas.

Yet again the story given by the Aitareya Brahmana V. 32-34 (aug's Translation, vol. ii. pp. 372-378) differs from all these.

But whatever may be the mode of their creation, all the counts are agreed that they were created, and that they are most sacred; and all ancient Hindu writers include Hymns, Brahmanas and Upanishads in the words *Veda* and *Vedas*.

These works included under the word *Śruti* are regarded, as we have said, as not composed by men. They have been seen, received or heard. They are thus most holy. The others, spoken as *Smṛiti*, are also holy and carry great authority with them. They also are divine. But whenever they appear to be inconsistent with the *Śruti*, their authority is at once overruled, as in the essence of what cannot be gainsaid.

This distinction between *Śruti* and *Smṛiti* (tradition) is a matter of the most vital importance from the theological, historical and literary points of view. It governs everything else. But while it is so, it must not be forgotten that, unlike the Roman Pope's authority in religious matters, any interpretation may be put upon the words of the *Śruti*—interpretations utterly inconsistent with one another and with the plain meaning of the words. This was done by the various schools of philosophers, and sects of religion, which arose in India in course of time, and to which tolerance was given by the Brahmanas, provided only they acknowledged the authority of the Vedas as divine and absolute. "The most conflicting views on points of vital importance were tolerated so long as their advocates succeeded, no matter by what means, in bringing their doctrines into harmony with passages of the Veda, strained and twisted in every possible sense".\* Those who professed to do so were orthodox, those who refused, like Buddha and the Jains, were heterodox. The former were tolerated, the latter were atheatised and persecuted to the death. The *Śruti* or Vedas were the exclusive possession of the Brahmanas: they were the stronghold of their hierarchical pretensions. To call their authority in question was to call in question the power and standing of the human caste. Atheists, theists, monotheists, polytheists, and agnostics acknowledged the authority of the *Śruti*, and the Brahmanas were satisfied. Their ministry was courted as the only means of winning divine favour by those who professed to believe in the divine, their doctrines were admitted by all such as believed in the trines as infallible, "their gods were worshipped as the only gods, and their voice was powerful enough," we are quoting from Max Müller, "to stamp the simple strains of the Rishis and the absurd lucubrations of the authors of the Brāhmanas, with a divine authority."†

\* Prof. Max Müller's *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 79.

† *Ibid* p. 81.

Thus we see that those works which are known as the V. constitute by universal consent the highest authority in Hindu. What the Bible is to the Christian and the Koran to the Muslim and much more the Vedas are to the Hindu.

While the Brahmanas are of at least equal authority with Upanishads, they are of infinitely greater authority than the *Bhagavad Gita* and any or all of the many *Puranas*.

The word *Brahmana* is literally that which relates to the 'mula' or 'ceremony', from *brahman* (not the masc. which means 'chief priest' *bráhman*). *Brahman*, itself etymologically means a 'drawing forth,' in the sense of 'producing,' 'making,' 'creating,' just as '*poet*' was derived from the Greek. Hence in a special manner it meant what was made or produced for the gods in the hymns, prayers, food, oblations made for presentation at sacrifices. This is the meaning of the word in the Rig-Veda. For proof take i. 3,5—'Receive the prayers (*brahmāni*) of the sacrificer'; i. 24, 11.—'Beseeching thee with prayers (*brahmāni*), I give thee'; i. 34, 18—'O Agni, by means of this prayer (*brahma*) do thou thrive'; i. 52, 7—'O Indra, like waves into a lake thy hymns (*brahmāni*) magnifying thy glory reach unto thee'; i. 84, 1—'Thy horses are harnessed with prayers (*brahmanā*).'  
Dr. John Muir in his *Original Sanskrit Texts* (Vol. i. p. 241, 3rd Ed.) writes: "The Rishis called their hymns by various names...and they applied to them the appellation of *brahma* in numerous passages as in i. 37, 4; viii. 32, 27, where the word is joined with the verb *gāyata*, 'sing,' and in vi. 69, 7, where the gods are supplicated to hear the *brahma*) as well as from the fact that the poets are (in i. 62, 13; v. 73, 10; vii. 22, 9; vii. 31, 11; x. 80, 7) to be considered as having fashioned or generated the prayer, in the same way as they are to have fashioned or generated hymns in other texts (as in i. 109, v. 2, 11; vii. 15, 4; viii. 77, 4; x. 23, 6; x. 39, 14), where the sense is indisputable; while in other places (iv. 16, 21; v. 29, vi. 17, 13; vi. 50, 6; vii. 61, 6; x. 89, 3) new productions of poets are spoken of under the appellation of *brahma*."

The Vedas, including the Brahmanas, are regarded as only eternal as regards time, but infinite as regards extent or space, thus covering time and all space. Here is a typical extract from the Taittiriya Brahmana (iii. 10.11.3) in proof:—

"Bharadvāja lived through three lives in the state of a religious student. Indra approached him when he was lying old and decrepit; and said to him: 'Bharadvāja, if I give thee a fourth life, how wilt thou employ it?' I will lead the life of a religious student," he replied. He (Indra) showed him three mountain-like objects, as it were unknown. From each of them he took a handful, and, calling to him, 'Bharadvāja,' said, 'These are the three Vedas. The Vedas are infinite. This what thou hast studied during these three lives. Now there is another thing which thou hast not studied

ne and learn it. This is the universal science....He who knows\* this  
 quers a world as great as he would gain by the triple Vedic science.”

The mysterious, all-pervading spiritual Power, Presence, Force  
 Entity, which was regarded as the one without a second, *nirgun*,  
 without attribute, unbounded by any limitations of personality and  
 individuality, they called Brahman (nom. neuter, *Brahmá*, from  
 Sanskrit *brah* to expand, because it expanded itself through all  
 ice—‘omnipenetrative’). Hence Brahmo-Somaj.

Dr. Krishna Mohun Banerjea, C. I. E., used to contend that  
 ahmos had made a great mistake in calling, after the philosophic  
 ndus the living and true God *Brahma*, and their society or church  
*ahmo-Somaj*, considering the history of the word. For the word  
 l not come to mean God until, (after meaning prayer, hymns,  
 d, oblations, etc.) it came to be applied to the ‘sage,’ ‘poet,’  
 ficiating *priest* and ultimately ‘a special description of priest.’  
 was from this secondary meaning of the word that our *Brahmana*,  
 meaning the ‘prayer manual’ or hand-book, came to be so  
 led. Associated with the Hindu god Agni is much more of real  
 igious truth, than with the impersonal *all-embracing* Brahma.

To understand what follows we must bear in mind the duties  
 of the leading classes of priests in charge  
 of the ancient sacrifices. They were these :  
*first*—in the sense of lowest—the *Adhvaryu-*  
*ests*, who had charge of preparing the sacrificial ground, includ-  
 g the building of the altar (*vedi*), the adjustment of the vessels,  
 fetching of wood and water, the procuring and immolating of the  
 animals, the lighting of the fire and the throwing of the offerings  
 the fire : in fact the whole manual part of the service. They and  
 ir assistants are spoken of as in charge of the body of the  
 rifice. Their Veda, which they had to *mutter* while discharging  
 several parts of their duties, was the Black or Dark Yajur-Veda ;  
 d their Brahmana—the most important which has come down to  
 —the Satapatha Brahmana.

The *second* class of priests was the *Hotar* or *Hotri*, who and  
 third are spoken of as the two most important limbs of the  
 rifice. Neither of these had however to do with any manual  
 our. The Hotri had to *recite* the sacrificial hymns, paying the  
 ictest attention to the difficult rules of pronunciation and  
 entuation, but without chanting. The Hotri priests were  
 posed to thoroughly know the Rig-Veda Sanhita, from which all  
 Mantras were taken, so that no special manual of hymns was  
 ared for them. Their duties were, it is believed, discussed in  
 Bahvricha-bráhmanas, which have not come down to us.

The *third* class was the *Udgatri* or singers of the Samans.  
 ir chief duty was to *chant* the hymns in a loud melodious voice

---

He who knows this—‘*ya evam veda*’—so often repeated, gave the name *Veda*.



in a special order—that given in the Sama-Veda-Sanhita. They were isolated verses selected from the different hymns of the I Veda, suited for the special occasions for which they were required. The Brahmanas of the Sama-Veda detail the duties of the Udgri priest.

In addition to these three, there was the *Brahman* hims who was the general controller of the whole performance. Squat so as to command all, he was expected to correct any mistake wh any of the others may have committed. It was only at Somas t he took an active part, when his place as superintendent was ta by a Sadasya.

It may be worth noticing that the same ceremony is descri in the Brahmanas of the different priests, inasmuch as all of th severally had parts in the same sacrifices; while there were ot ceremonies in which only one set of priests took part. These lat will be found described only in the Brahmanas of the priests wh duties were there described.

The Brahmana of the Atharvan Veda seems to have no spe purpose, or special class of priests in view.

Unlike the Koran, but like the Bible, the Vedas are one but many books. The Bible is said  
 Various Brahmanas. consist of some 66 books. It is difficult say how many books there may be in

Vedas as they are divided and sub-divided into various classes; each class contains a larger or smaller number of books. They have never been brought together or published as one volume or a series of uniform volumes. Some have never been translated, some are for ever lost. They are sometimes spoken of as from to 70 in number, including comments, and about an eq number of Upanishads, large and small. The first division of V literature is into four Vedas: (1) the Rig-Veda which is by far t best known and the most interesting; (2) The Sama-Veda; (3) t Yajur-Veda or Yajush; and (4) the Atharva or cursing Veda. Ea Veda is sub-divided into two parts, respectively called the *Mantr* or *Sanhitas* (i. e. hymns) and the *Brahmanas*.

Sayana, in his commentary on the Rig-Veda, says:—"T definition of the Veda as a book composed of *Mantra* and *Brahma* is unobjectionable. Hence Apastamba says in the *Yajna-pa bhasha*, Mantra and Brahmana have the name of Veda." The fi half of these, i. e., the Sanhitas, consists altogether of metrical hym or prose forms of prayer. The first two of these Sanhitas—t Rik and the Sama—consist altogether of Mantras of the metric order. They are both reproduced into English metres by M Griffith, late Principal of the Benares Sanskrit College.

The *Brahmanas*, the other half of the Vedas, and with Hind of equal authority with the Mantras, being Sruti and not Smrit are unmistakably of a later age than their respective *Mantra*

They quote largely from the latter. The language is not so very archaic. The gods underwent a change during the interval intervening between the time when the mantras were composed and

As to their Age.

that in which the Brahmanas were compiled. Indra and Varuna, for instance, are being superseded by Vishnu and Rudra. Dr. Haug assigns the composition of the bulk of the *Brahmanas*, to the years 200—1400 B. C., and of the *Mantras* to the period 1400—2000 B. C.; the very oldest of the hymns going back possibly to 2400 B. C., a period, however, far short of Egyptian and Babylonian lore. But Prof. Max Müller and later Sanskritists are not disposed to allow even Dr. Haug's antiquity. The former puts down the *Brahmanas* at 800—600 B. C., and the hymns at 1000 to 1200 B. C.\* But when we say that the *Brahmanas*, as compilations are unmistakably of a later age than their respective *mantras*, it must be understood that we do not deny that there is in the *Brahmanas*, much that is older than any of the *mantras*, things, such as myths, legends, stories, to which the *mantras* clearly allude. In the *mantras* the ancient Rishis do not tell the stories they refer to, because to them they are things well known requiring no telling—for example the story of Sunesepha, the various accounts of the creation, &c. The Rishis knew these and took for granted that their audiences knew them, so they merely allude to them in their songs or hymns. Thus, some of the contents of the *Brahmanas*, constituting folk lore and mythical and legendary stories, some others of the sacrifices, as also their ideas of the gods, may be and most likely are older than any one of the hymns which have come down to us. But this much is certain that the *Brahmanas* are the oldest *prose* compositions now extant of the Aryan family.

The Hindu theory with regard to the whole Veda literature is that all date back to eternity, and that consequently there can be no such thing as new *Brahmanas*, where all are eternal. But this theory is now so far discounted that we need only to refer to it and pass on to more mundane matters. Panini, the great and authoritative Sanskrit grammarian, rejected it, and clearly states that there were old and new *Brahmanas*. He lays down a distinction which closely bears on this.

A book composed by a certain author may be called by an adjective derived from the author's name. A work which has only been thought and promulgated by a person is not to be called his book, but

\* See Max Müller's *Chips* I. 14. *His. of A. S. L.* p. 435. The religion of Babylonia is old when the Semites under Sargon conquered Babylonia about 3750 B. C. Chinese History proper begins about 2000 B. C., though the Chinese had the art of writing a thousand years before that. King Menes, founder of the first Egyptian dynasty, is set down at 3200 B. C.; and is said to have united the two crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt. The Vedas are young compared with these. #

bears its own title, say grammar, or logic, or whatever else it may be put together with, an adjective derived from the owner's name. "But adds Panini "if the work referred to consists either of Vedic hymns or of old Brāhmanas, then it is not correct to use these derivative adjectives in the singular, but it is necessary to use the masculine plural." This peculiarity of the Sanskrit language has a parallel in the Greek, founded on the fact that in Greece, as in India, old compositions were handed down orally among certain classes of the community. Hence it was much more natural to say that "the Taittiriya's relate" than to speak of "Tittiri's book", when on the other hand in regard to a comparatively new work, as the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, it is more correct to say "Yājñavalkya's Brāhmaṇa" than to say "the Yājñavalkya's relate", as we know that it was composed by Yājñavalkya. Hence, as a matter of fact, we read Yājñavalkya's brāhmaṇāni. "And why?" asks and answers Kātyāyana, "because they are of too recent an origin; that is to say, they are almost contemporaneous with ourselves." Their very name thus classes them as modern. And they all bear internal evidence that they were composed in time, some parts of the older than other parts, and some Brāhmanas older than others. One Brāhmaṇa quotes another, "not in support of its own doctrine but in order to refute it. Thus the Kaushītakin is frequently attacked in the Tandya-brāhmaṇa."\*

"It is certain," Max Müller continues a few pages on, "that no Brahmana belonging to any Veda was composed before the division of priests into Hotris, Udgatris and Adhvaryus,—had taken place. Before that division there was but one collection of hymns, that of the Bhavrichas," and that was the Rig-Veda Sanhita.

Singularly enough, the Hindus possess no ancient MSS. of the Vedas or Smṛiti. The Vedas were handed down to comparatively modern times, not by written compositions but by memory—the method of teaching his pupils by word of mouth;—and this continued from age to age, it is believed, long after the writing was known among the people as a means of communication for ordinary business transactions. Before, however, writing was invented in India or became known, the compositions had become so sacred that there was the greatest unwillingness to allow any knowledge of them to pass outside the circles of the officiating priests, and consequently a fear to commit them to any earthly form or material. And when it was so committed, the material was of so perishable a character and the climate of so destructive a nature, that "all Indian MSS. are comparatively modern, and one who has probably handled more Indian MSS. than anybody else, Mr. A. Burnell, has lately expressed his con-

fiction that no MS. written one thousand years ago is now existent in India, and that it is almost impossible to find one written five hundred years ago, for most MSS. which claim to be of that date are merely copies of old MSS, the dates of which are repeated by the copyists."\*

In our consideration of this literature it must not be forgotten that, unlike the Sanhitas or Mantras, the  
 Lost Brahmanas. Brahmanas are in prose, and therefore not so easily remembered as if they were

poetry. Besides, the position which the Brahmanas took up in regard to the Vedas, constituting them the one sole authority, coupled with the other fact that the Brahmana parts of them came down as heir-looms in various families, some of which became extinct, has led to a good deal of difficulty, and to the rise of a new burgy in the form of summaries known as Kalpa-Sûtras, contributing to the gradual neglect, if not extinction, of the verbose and tedious discussions of the Brahmanas. Max Müller expressly says that this "accounts for the loss of many of the old Sâkhâs (the whole literary possession of a priestly school), Sanhitas as well Brahmanas."†

"There must have been, as we may learn from Pânini and Atanjalî's *Mahabhashya*, a much larger number of Brâhmanas longed to each Veda; and even Sâyana, who lived only about 600 years ago, was acquainted with more than we have now."‡  
 the extinction of the priestly *charana* (the ideal fellowship, whose memories§ only the text was preserved, and whose words were regarded as the breath of Brahma) these words would of course have been lost without the slightest chance of their being ever recovered.

Some of these Brâhmanas were, as a matter of fact, lost, and others changed in their various recensions so as to differ greatly. In the Smritis, which ought to agree with and to be founded only on the Vedas, are found to be in some cases not consistent with, and in other cases not to be perceptibly founded on, the Vedas. This is the mode in which the difficulty is faced by one of their most distinguished commentators:—"The Vedas are the highest authority for good and bad; and none of the objections made before would apply to the Vedas, which are faultless from all eternity, dependent by themselves, and as they were revealed, unaffected by the faults of human authors. Therefore, while to us those agreements are of authority which were made by men who knew the law, the Vedas, again, were the authority for those men themselves, like

---

*Indian Antiquary*, 1880, p. 233. Max Müller in S. B. E. Vol. x. p. xi. and *India: what can it teach us?* p. 202, ed. 1892. The Bower medical MS. on birch bark is older, it was discovered only within the last three or four years, and not in India.

M. M.'s *His.* p. 367.

† Haug. vol. i. p. 53.

§ M. M.'s *His.* p. 373; 106.

Manu, &c. And although we have not before our eyes a Veda which is the source of these laws, we must still conclude that Manu and the rest had." (*Hārodatta*). That is, in other words, *the Veda on which Manu founded his Institutes is lost*. A higher authority than Hārodatta, no less than Apastamba, proclaims the same fact. "Certain rules must be considered as given in Brāhmanas of which the tradition or reading has been destroyed. Their former existence must be inferred from the simple fact that these rules are still followed by men; the only exception being where customs can be proved to depend on selfish motives. In this case a man who follows such unauthorised customs shall go to hell." (*Apastamba Sūtras*, sec. xii). His commentator says—"The original passages were lost by the negligence of the students"; and Kumār adds—"It must not be said that their destruction is impossible, for we see it take place every day, whether by negligence or idleness or by death of men." The lost traditions here referred to are Brāhmanas, the names of some of which are known, but MSS. of which are extant. Some of these may possibly never have been written, handed down only by oral tradition as all first were.

Their being lost was also consistent with their study being regarded as of the highest value. Their study of the highest value. In confirmation of this we find the following in the *Satapatha Brahman* (xi. 5, 6, 1.) :—

"There are five great sacrifices, which are great ceremonies. The fifth is the Veda offering. This means private study of the Vedas. In this Veda-sacrifice speech is the *juhū*, the soul the *upahhrīt*, the eye the *dhruva*, intelligence the *śruva* [these four words indicate spoons or ladles], truth the *ablution*, and paradise the conclusion. He who, knowing this, daily studies the Veda conquers an undecaying world more than thrice as great as that which he acquires who bestows this whole earth filled with riches. Wherefore the Veda should be studied. Verses of the Rig-Veda are milk oblations to the gods. He who knowing this, daily reads these verses, satisfies the gods with milk oblations; and they being satisfied, satisfy him with property, with breath, with generative power, with complete bodily soundness with all excellent blessings. Streams of butter, streams of honey flow as *svadha* oblations to the Fathers. Yajush verses are offerings of butter to the gods. He who knowing this, daily reads these verses, satisfies the gods with offerings of butter; and they being satisfied, satisfy him, &c. (repeated in the preceding). Sāman-verse are Soma libations to the gods. He who knowing this, daily reads these verses, satisfies the gods with Soma libations; and they being satisfied, satisfy him, &c., (as above). Verses of Atharva and Angiras are oblations of fat to the gods. He who knowing this, daily reads these verses satisfies the gods with oblations of fat; and they, &c. (as above). Prescriptive and scientific treatises, dialogues, traditions, tales, verse and eulogistic texts [i. e. the Brāhmanas] are oblations of honey to the gods. He who, knowing this, satisfies the gods with oblations of honey; and they, &c. (as above). Of this Veda-sacrifice there are four *Vashatkaras*, when the wind blows, when it lightens, when it thunders, when it crashes; wherefore when it blows, lightens, thunders or crashes, let the man, who knows this

ad, in order that these Vashatkaras may not be interrupted. He who does so is freed from dying a second time, and attains to an union with Brahman. Even if he cannot read vigorously, let him read one text relating to the gods. Thus he is not deprived of his living creatures... Now comes an encomium upon Vedic study. Study and teaching are loved. He who practises them becomes composed in mind. Independent of others, he daily attains his objects, sleeps pleasantly, becomes his own best physician. Control of his senses, concentration of mind, increase of intelligence, renown, capacity to educate mankind, are the results of study. Increasing intelligence secures for the Brahman the four attributes of saintliness, suitable conduct, renown and capacity for educating mankind. When so educated, men guarantee to the Brahman the enjoyment of the four prerogatives which are his due, reverence, the receipt of gifts, freedom from oppression, and from death by violence, all the modes of exertion, which are known between heaven and earth. Study of the Veda occupies the highest rank, in the case of him, who, knowing this, studies it. Wherefore this study is to be practised. On every occasion when a man studies the Vedic hymns, he in fact performs a complete ceremonial of sacrifice, i. e., whosoever knowing this, so studies. Wherefore this study, &c., &c. And even when a man perfumed with unguents, adorned with jewels, satiated with food, and reposing on a comfortable couch, studies the Veda, he has all the merit of one who performs penance felt to the very tips of his nails . . . When a man reads dialogues [and legends], these two sorts of compositions are respectively oblations of cooked milk and cooked ash. He who, knowing this, daily reads Rig-Veda verses satisfies the gods with honey; and they, when satisfied, satisfy him with all objects of desire, and with all enjoyments . . . He who, knowing this, daily studies dialogues and the different classes of ancient stories satisfies the gods with milk and ash-oblations; and they, &c., &c. (as before). The waters move. The sun moves. The moon moves. The constellations move. The Brahman who on any day does not study the Veda, is on that day like what these moving bodies would be if they ceased to move or act.\* Wherefore such study is to be practised."

This long extract makes it quite clear that even at the time of the Satapatha Brahmanas the study of the Brahmanas was regarded as the study of the Veda.

In describing the Brahmanas, it must not be forgot, as Max Müller observes, that there is a common stock in the Brahmanas of each Veda. The same ceremonial is described, the same doubts raised, similar solutions are proposed, and many chapters are located in the same words. Before each recension took its present shape—and few of these numerous recensions have been preserved to us—they must have rolled from hand to hand, sometimes losing old, sometimes gathering new matter; now broken to pieces, now rearranged till at last the name of their author became merged in the name of the Charana [school or family of priests] that preserved his work.†

Each Veda, as stated above, has its own Brahmanas. They have we have seen the common name of *sruti*, 'hearing,' that which

\* Śāyana's note on R. V. 67. 3. tells us that the supporting of the sky by mantras has been recorded in the Taittiriya Br.—'The gods feared lest the sun should fall from the heaven; they propped it up by metres.' Muir, Vol. iii. p. 276.

† M. M.'s *History*. p. 183.

the pupil priest heard from his teacher, the exposition teaching which he learned from his master. Yet there are, might be expected a very great variety, arising chiefly from great variety of priests used for the different kinds of sacrifice big and little, and the different parts of these sacrifices.

It should also be noted that while a whole work consisting many chapters or books is called a Brahmana, sometimes a section of the several books or chapters is individually styled Brahmana. Thus, in the Satapatha Brahmana, there are in the first Book alone nine chapters, including 37 Brahmanas, that averaging 4 Brahmanas to each chapter. This is somewhat confusing, the more so because these smaller Brahmanas are sometimes quoted by their special titles. In what follows reference is made only to the larger Brahmanas or whole works.

## CHAPTER II.

### I. The Rig-Veda Brahmanas.

1. To the *Rig-Veda*, two Brahmanas are attached, viz. (1.) *Aitareya Brahmana*, edited, translated and explained by Dr. Haug, Bombay, 1863. See *Indian Wisdom* (M. W's.) pp. 27. Max Müller's A. S. L. 313 ff. It is being re-edited with commentary, &c. by Pandit Satyavrata Samasrama of Calcutta. The first vol. is published. It is to be completed in 4 Vols. of fasciculi. 5,000 slokas.

To this belongs the *Aitareya-Aranyaka* in five books, the first three translated by Max Müller, S. B. E. vol. i. pp. 155-268 (cf. Intro. pp. xci-xcviii), with its Upanishad. The original is edited by Roer in the Bibliotheca Indica of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

And (2) The *Kausitaki Brahmana*, otherwise called *Shuklayana* with its Aranyaka and Upanishad. Max Müller's translation of the Upanishad is also included in vol. i. of S. B. E., pp. 268-313 and Prof. Cowell's will be found in the Bibliotheca Indica. See M. Müller's Intro. S. B. E., vol. i. pp. xcvi-c.

The *Aitareya Brahmana* spreads over eight books, each containing five chapters or lectures and sub-divided into an equal number of sections (*Khandas*) amounting in the whole to 285. It is principally in metrical form, but with however large portions in prose.

The *Kausitaki Brahmana* contains two dialogues of some interest, one in which Indra instructs Prastardana in theology, (an extract from which will be found below) and another in which Ajátasatru, King of Benares, communicates divine knowledge to a priest called Bálaki. By many this Brahmana is, as a whole, regarded and treated as an Upanishad.

The two Brahmanas of the Rig-Veda treat essentially of the same matter, but not unfrequently take opposite sides; and while both deal largely of Soma or Homa sacrifices, the former almost confines itself to these. They are identified with sacrifices in which the fermented juice of the Soma or Moon plant is used in worshipping the god Soma, now accepted by scholars as none other than the Moon, of which the plant was the earthly incarnation.

Hindus give the following story in explanation of the name Aitareya. It is related by Sāyana in his introduction to the Brāhmana. An ancient Rishi had among his many wives one who was called Itara. She had a son Mahidasa Aitareya by name. The Rishi preferred the sons of his other wives to Mahidasa, and went even so far as to insult him once by placing all his other children in his lap to his exclusion. His mother, grieved at this ill-treatment of her son, prayed to her family goddess, who appeared in her celestial form in the midst of the assembly, placed Mahidasa on a throne, and gave him, as a token of honour for his surpassing all her children in learning, a boon which had the appearance of a Brahmana. The boon having been received a Brahmana, consisting of 40 sections, came forth through the mind of Mahidasa, and its Aranyaka was revealed in the shape of the vow of an hermit. Hence, after Mahidasa Aitareya, the Brahmana and its Aranyakas are called Aitareya. According to Brahmanical ideas, vows, curses and blessings can assume visible forms as stated in the story.

Notwithstanding the amount of matter which the Aitareya contains, and the number of sacrifices, rites and ceremonies of which it treats, it does not profess to be in any sense complete, however exhausting it may be to the reader. It refers directly or indirectly to sacrifices of which it gives no account; and rites, such as given in the Hotri priest hand-books, are simply passed over unnoticed. As an example take the ceremony of choosing the sacrificial priests with which the hand-books begin, commencing with the announcement to the Hotri priest, "There will be a Soma sacrifice of such and such a one; you are respectfully requested to act as Hotar at such a sacrifice;" the priest's question, "What is the reward for the priests?" and the reply, "One hundred and twelve cows." The rite ends with the following formulæ.

"I . . . . . of such and such a gotra will bring the . . . . . sacrifice . . . . . for which ten things (cows and so on) are required, and for which as fee one hundred and twelve cows must be given. At this sacrifice be thou my Hotar." The priest accepts the appointment in the formula. 'May the great thing thou hast spoken of to me, the splendour thou spokest of, the way of performance thou spokest of, the enjoyment thou spokest of; may all that thou spokest of come to me; may it enter me; may I have enjoyment through it. Agni is thy divine Hotar. He is thy divine Hotar. I am thy human Hotar.'



Such was the universal formula used.

The model of all the one-day Soma sacrifices is the Agnish itself the holiest rite in the whole Brahmanical service. All Soma sacrifices are modifications of it. Hence the first three chapters of the Aitareya, treat of it. Itself lasts generally for four days, each of which has its own ceremonies duly described. Of the first four days are merely introductory, yet every detail absolutely necessary to the efficacy of the sacrifice.

In the various ceremonies of princely inauguration described in the Aitareya, the principal part consists in the sprinkling of holy water over the head of the kings, reminding one of the anointing of the Jewish kings, as also of their baptisms. To qualify the newly made king to partake of the Soma, he had to be made a Brahman for the occasion. But no sooner was the ceremony finished than he had to resign his Brahmanhood and to be rebrahmanized. Such was the high dignity of the Brahman even in these Vedic times, a thousand years before the foundation of the Empire of St. Peter at Rome. He is now fallen, under Muhammadan and Christian rule on evil days. Below, we quote from the Brâhmana words indicative of the promises made to kings for thus submitting to Brahman priestcraft.

In the Kaushitaki Brahmana there is a passage implying special prominence given to a Hindu deity who came afterwards to be known as Siva. He is called Isâna and Mahâdeva. The passage may be an interpolation, as Siva is not one of the Vedic deities. There are other circumstances which render it probable that the whole of this Brahmana is less ancient than the Aitareya Brahmana.

"If," remarks Max Müller, "we compare the Brahmana of the Aitareyins and the Kaushîtakins, we find their wording, when they treat of the same matters, very different. The order in which the sacrifices are described is not always the same, nor are the ceremonial rules always identical. Illustrations and legends are interspersed in the Brahmana of the Kaushîtakins of which no trace can be found in the Brahmana of the Aitareyins. And with all these differences the literal coincidence of whole chapters and the frequent occurrence of the same sentences, the same comparisons and illustrations, render it impossible to ascribe to each a perfectly independent origin." p. 191.

Both contain a large number of myths and legends of much interest, independent of the purpose for which they are introduced. One of the most interesting in Vedic literature is the legend of Sunahsépha, found in the second part of the Aitareya Brahmana, given as an explanation of a hymn in the Rig-Veda Samhita. There is a good deal of parallelism between it and the story of Abraham offering up Isaac. Some of these legends, including that of Sunahsépha, quoted at length by Prof. Max Müller in his history

408—419,\* are much older traditions than the text in which they are embedded. They are of special value in the study of comparative religion and comparative language.

This Brahmana is also known under the name Sāṅkhâyaṇa Brahmana; just as the older Aitareya is spoken of as the Asvalayana Brahmana. The arrangement of the Kaushitaki, as stated above, differs considerably from that of the Aitareya Brâhmana. For example, the sacrifice called Dikshaniya Ishti, which comes first in the Aitareya, occupies the 7th Chapter in the Kaushitaki. While there are sacrifices thus common to both, there are others which are found in the one, but not in the other. Still it is very apparent that they had a common origin. It is also worthy of notice that they appeal continually to earlier authorities, not to speak of the Sanhita to which reference is so often made. In the Kaushitaki-brâhmana, "the conflicting opinions of ancient sages are so well confronted, and their respective merits so closely discussed, that," as Prof. Max Müller remarks (His. p. 428), "we sometimes imagine ourselves reading the dogmatic philosophy of Panini." The older of the two Brahmanas consists of 40, the younger of 30 chapters or Adhyâyas; hence, according to Panini, they would be called—"trainsāni and chatvarinsani brâhmaṇāni." Some of the stories common to both may be here referred to as of special interest—"Kavasha Ailusha is the author of several hymns in the 10th Book of the Rig Veda. Yet this same Kavasha was expelled from the sacrifice as an impostor and as the son of a slave (śyâh putra), and he was readmitted, only because the gods had shown him special favour... In the Mahabharat he is called a bhâda." (M. M's His. p. 59.)

The following story from the Kaushitaki, declaring how to deal with a mistake, is not given in the Aitareya:—

"King Pratardana sat down in the presence of the Rishis of Nimisha and asked the question—'If the Sadasya should make known a past blunder, how would you be free from sin?' The priests were silent. Their Brahman said, 'I do not know this, alas! Let us ask the teacher of our fathers, the elder Jâtukarnya.' He asked him—'How the blunder could become not a blunder? saying the passage again, or by an offering?' Jâtukarnya said—'The passage must be said again. The Brahman asked him again—'Should he say again the Shastra... or whatever else it may be, from beginning to end?' Jâtukarnya said—'As far as the blunder extends, so far let him say again, whether a verse, a half-verse, a foot, a word or a letter.' Then said the Kaushitaki: 'Let him not say the passage again, nor let him perform a second offering.' It is not a 'blunder,' so said Kaushitaki; 'for whatever under the Hotris commit at the sacrifice without being aware of it, all that is the divine Hotri, makes whole; and this is confirmed by a verse from the Rig-Veda.' (Kaush.-Br. vi. 11). See M. M's His. p. 407.

\* Dr. Haug's remark on the story is worth repeating here. "The story," says he, "is highly interesting; for it proves beyond doubt the existence of human infirmities among the ancient Brahmins, and shows that they were in a half-savage state; for we find here a Brahmin selling his son to a prince to be immolated." *ibid.*, Vol. i. p. 65.

The Aitareya Brahmana ends with a most remarkable spell the use of which properly would lead to the total ruin and destruction of one's enemy. As the Astronomy of it is somewhat peculiar we will indulge in a few short extracts from it. It is called "spell to be spoken and applied by a king to kill his enemies."

"All enemies and foes of him who knows this ceremony die round about him. Round him five deities are dying, viz., Lightning, rain, moon, sun, fire. The rain when fallen is absorbed by the moon which disappears; the moon at the time of the new is absorbed by the sun which disappears &c. . . Out of fire the sun is born. . . From the sun the moon is born. . . From the moon the rain is born. . . From rain lightning is born. . . In this way he puts his enemy down even should he wear a stone helmet (i.e. is well armed.)"

## II. The Sama Veda Brahmanas :—

(1.) The *Tândya*, or *Maha*-, or *Praudha*-, or *Panchavinsī Brahmana*, edited in the Bibliotheca Indica, with Sāyana's Commentary, by Pandit Ananda Chundra Vedantavagisa. See Dr. R. L. Mitra's *Chhândogya Upan-Intro.* p. 11.

(2.) The *Shadvinsī* Brahmana, with Sāyana's Commentary an English translation, &c. by A. C. Burnell, Ph. D., was advertised in 1877, *in preparation*. The original is edited with Sāyana's Commentary by Pandit Satyavrata Samasrami, but without translation. Price one rupee. The last part of it, the *Adbhutadhyaya* Brahmana has been edited and translated into German and explained by Dr. Weber, in his *Zwei Vedische Texte über Omina und Portenta* (4th Berlin, 1859). Dr. Burnell's English has not appeared.

(3.) The *Sāmavidhāna* Brahmana, edited together with Sāyana's Commentary and Introduction by A. C. Burnell, Ph. D. London, Trübner, 1873. Vol. I. The second volume (Translation Notes and Indexes) was also promised in 1877. There is an edition of this, the third Brahmana, published in Calcutta with Sāyana's Commentary and a *Bengali* translation, by Pandit Satyavrata Samasrami, price five Rupees. 500 slokas. Manuals containing the rites and recitations prescribed by the Sāmavidhāna for persons who desire offspring, in which the Sama texts are quoted in full, are in circulation in MS. and in print.

(4.) The *Vansha* Brahmana, edited and translated into German by Professor Weber in I. S. iv. 371-386; also together with Sāyana's Commentary by A. C. Burnell, Ph. D., Mangalore 1873; and also with Sāyana's Commentary and *Bengali* translation by Pandit Satyavrata Samasrama, Calcutta Price 1/- This Brahmana, Sāyana calls "the 8th and last." 40 slokas. Genealogy of the Sama Veda Rishis and their descendants.

(5.) The *Arsheya* Brahmana, the Sanskrit text, edited together with extracts from Sāyana's Commentary, &c., an Introduction and index of words by A. C. Burnell, Ph. D., Mangalore 1876; also edited with Sāyana's Commentary, by Pandit Satyavrata Samasrama. Price five Rupees : 300 slokas.

(6.) The *Devatādhya* Brahmana, edited with Sāyana's Commentary, Index of words, &c., by A. C. Burnell, Ph. D., Mangalore, 1873; also edited with Sāyana's Commentary and a Bengali translation by Pundit Satyavrata Samasrami, Calcutta, price Re. 1.

(7.) The *Samhitopanish* Brahmana, edited with a Commentary and Index of words, &c., by A. C. Burnell, Mangalore, 1877.

(8.) The *Mantra* or *Chhândogya*-Brahmana in ten books, eight of which are published as the Chhândogya-Upanishad, in the Bibliotheca Indica, edited by Dr. Roer and translated by Dr. R. L. Mitra. These same 8 books are translated in Vol. I. of the S. B. E. as properly an Upanishad. As such they are outside our present study. The first two books were discovered by Pundit Satyavrata Samasrami a few years ago and edited, annotated, translated into Bengali and published in Calcutta, price Rs. 4. It is Sāyana's *sixth* Brahmana.

(9.) The *Jaiminiya*, or *Talavakāra* Brahmana was, only a few years ago, discovered (to European scholars) in Southern India by Dr. Burnell. A part of it was previously known as the Talavakāra, or Kena Upanishad, edited and translated by Roer in the Bibliotheca Indica; and translated by Prof. Max Müller in Vol. I. of the S. B. E. pp. 147-156; cf. *Introd.* pp. lxxxix. ff. An account of the Brahmana proper is given by Prof. Whitney in the American Oriental Society's Proceedings at Boston, May, 1883.

(10.) The *Satyama* Brahmana, quoted by Sāyana (see Max Müller R.-V., Vol. V. *Introd.* p. x. ff.), seems to be lost.

(11.) The *Bhā* Brahmana, one of the old Brahmanas, according to Panini, seems also to be lost; and so of others.

The first and most important of these Brahmanas is the *Tāndya*, which is also called the *Praudha* and *The Tāndya-Brahmana*. Panchavinsa. It is thus called because of

its containing 25 books. Like the others, presupposes the three-fold order of priests and the three groups of hymns comprised under their own names, and more especially the hymns of the Rig-Veda, and, as derived from them, those of the Sama-Veda. Weber describes the contents of the Tāndya Brahmana as "in the main of a very dry and unprofitable character; or in mystic trifling it often exceeds all bounds. . . Nevertheless from its great extent, this work contains a mass of highly interesting legends as well as of information generally. It refers solely to the celebration of the Soma sacrifices and to the chanting of the *imans*, accompanying it, which are quoted by their technical names. These sacrifices were celebrated in a great variety of ways; here is one special classification of them according as they extended over one day or several, or finally over more than 12 days. The latter could only be performed by Brahmins, and that in considerable numbers, and might last 100 days, or even several years." Fancy the one sacrifice lasting several years in its performance!

The sacrifices known as *Vrātyastomas* by which Indians of Aryan origin, but not living according to the Brahmanical system, and Non-Aryans obtained admission to the Brahman community, are of special interest. The accounts given of them are preceded by a description of the dress and mode of life of those who are to offer them :—

“They drive in open chariots of war, carry bows and lances, wear turbans, robes bordered with red and having fluttering ends, shoes, and sheepskins folded double; their leaders are distinguished by brown robes and silver neck-ornaments; they pursue neither agriculture nor commerce; their laws are in a constant state of confusion; they speak the same language as those who have received Brahmanical consecration, but nevertheless call what is easily spoken hard to pronounce.”

The following words from this Brahmana are, to say the least, suggestive of thought :—

(1) “The Lord of creatures offered himself a sacrifice for the benefit of the *devas*,” p. 410. The *devas* were mortals who thus became divine or glorified. On this the following comment may be taken from *Apastamba* (ii. 7. 16)—“Formerly men and gods lived together in this world. Then the gods in reward of their sacrifices went to heaven, but men were left behind. Those men who perform sacrifices in the same manner as the gods did, dwell (after death) with the gods and Brahma in heaven.”

(2) “Oh thou animal limb, now being consigned to the fire; thou art the annulment of sins committed by gods. *Thou art the annulment of sins committed by men. Thou art the annulment of sins committed by ourselves.* Whatever sins we have committed by *slaves*, *pp. xi* thou art the annulment thereof. Whatever sins we have committed, *not ang or awake*, thou art the annulment thereof. Whatever sins we have committed, knowing or unknown, thou art the annulment thereof. Thou art the annulment,—of sin.” *Tandya Maha-Brahmana*, p. 55.

Here is Vedic teaching in which we find one of the great truths of Christianity as to the efficacy of sacrifice towards the annulling of sin taught with great force and clearness. Would that the character and nature of Him who is Himself *the priest* and *the victim* were equally clearly known and forcibly taught. In the *Satapatha Brahmana*, as we shall see below, we are told of *Prajāpati*, the Lord of creation, that :—

“One half of him was mortal and the other half immortal, and with that which was mortal he was afraid of death.”

The *Gayatri Br.*, *Asyavā Br.* and the *Pratigraha Brahmana*, sometimes met with as separate MSS, are parts of the *Tandya Br.*

This, the second of the *Sama-Veda Brahmanas*, proclaims itself as really a supplement of the first. Though itself consisting of several books, it is in reality Book 26th of the *Pañchavinsa-Brahmana*. It deals principally with sacrifices of expiation and ceremonies of imprecation. The fifth book is of special interest as a picture of the time in reference to the daily occurrences of life, its omens and portents, with the rites to avert evil. “The ceremonies

first given," Weber adds,\* "are those to be observed on the occurrence of vexatious events generally; then come those for cases of sickness among men and cattle, of damaged crops, losses of precious things, &c.; those to be performed in the event of earthquakes, of phenomena in the air and in the heavens, &c., of marvellous appearances on altars and on the images of the gods, of electric phenomena and the like, and of miscarriages." From various circumstances Weber concludes that this Brahmana is not older than the days of Megasthenes. Max Müller satisfies himself by simply remarking that it "must be of very modern date." He however adds that "it mentions not only temples, but images of gods, which are said to laugh, to cry, to sing, to dance, to burst, to sweat, and to twinkle"; so that here, in any case, the Vedas are plainly committed to idolatry, and that of the rudest character.

Sayana says of the Shadvinsa, "that it both treats of such ceremonies as are not contained in the Tândya-Brahmana, and also gives points of divergence from the latter. It is chiefly expiatory sacrifices and ceremonies of imprecation that we find in it, as also short, comprehensive, general rules. The fifth book (which with some addition to the end, is also found as a separate Brahmana under the name of Adbhuta Brahmana) "enumerates untoward occurrences of daily life, omens and portents, along with the rites to be performed to avert their evil consequences."

The **Kalasa** Brahmana is part of the Shadvinsha.

The *Samavidhana* Brahmana differs from the Aitareya, Kau-shitaki, and Satapatha Brahmanas in that it lacks both the copiousness of matter and the systematic arrangement which characterise them. In it we find "merely a dry set of precepts arranged in an orderly series," in place of "the reasons (true or imagined) for any particular practice which form the most remarkable feature of the great Brahmanas." But Dr. Burnell adds "Here and there a passage remains which is of the true Brahmana character; such is the incantation to the goddess Night, and the dialogue between the goddess and the magician; there can be little doubt, however that the boon asked for is a later interpolation." Various circumstances make it clear that in its present form, it is not later than the 7th century A.D. or earlier than the 5th century B.C.

The bulk of the work "consists of descriptions of certain penances and ceremonies which are supposed to destroy the evil effects of some actions, and in other cases to bring about results desired by the performer. The first (*tapas* and *prayascitta*) form but a small part of the work; the *Kamyā* rites, or ceremonies of a magical nature fill two out of the three chapters into which the *Samavidhāna* Brahmana is divided . . . It preserves for us a picture

\* Weber's *History of Indian Literature*, pp. 69-74.

of the beginning of a civilization and ideas and practices which other nations have in the course of their progress thrown aside, or concealed with shame, and which now exist hardly anywhere on the earth.”\* In a foot-note Dr. Burnell combats the idea that the degrading forms of modern Hinduism were got from the non-Aryan tribes. The Dravidian races of India (like all tribes with languages that do not denote sex) have only ancestor worship for a religion, and could never (by themselves) get beyond it.”

Dr. Burnell has also here a fling at the Missionaries, whom he describes as “narrow-minded,” “who were most anxious to prove the working of the devil in all strange customs.” He describes their works as “very untrustworthy,” and says that their “accounts have been always intended rather for the supporters of Missions and wondermongers than for students . . . But there is no such accidental or intentional misrepresentations in the Vedic literature.” While repudiating the charge here made against Missionaries, we remove all plausibility of any such suspicion against the present work by doing what Dr. Burnell says cannot be chargeable with misrepresentation, and that is giving throughout these notes literal translations, made by Sanskrit scholars who were not Missionaries, and some of whom, like Dr. Burnell, had little sympathy with Missionaries. Let us however proceed with our Brahmana, as expounded by Dr. Burnell.

“Among the ceremonies described in the Samavidhana Brahmana, we find some which are intended to be expiations, not only of sins, but also of crimes, such as murder; and, a little further on, we find other ceremonies of a like nature which are intended to destroy enemies.” The inconsistency is removed by the idea that it was the fear of consequences which led to expiations for the murder of enemies; these consequences being sickness or misfortune in this or in a future life. Of course superstitious ideas and practices were common. “Those described in the Samavidhana belong to what has been called the ‘Fetish age’ but nevertheless, in their combinations they give evidence, of a certain amount of progress and modification.”

Dr. Burnell classifies the sins named in the Brahmana before us, as—

1. Teaching an improper person (Sudras, females, &c.) i. 5. 10.
2. Sacrificing for an unfit person. i. 5. 11.
3. Seeing or smelling impure things. i. 5. 12.
4. Eating unclean things. i. 5. 13.
5. Committing *upapâtakas*. i. 5. 14.
6. Drinking spirits. i. 5. 15.
7. Intercourse with a Sudra woman. i. 6. 6.
8. Intercourse with a wife at forbidden seasons. i. 8. 7.

9. Accepting presents from a king. i. 7. 1.
10. Receiving forbidden presents. i. 7. 2 & 8. 3.
11. Killing a cow. i. 7. 7.
12. Killing any other animal. i. 7. 8.
13. Breach of chastity by a Bramacharin. i. 7. 9.
14. Marrying while an elder brother is unmarried. i. 7. 10.
15. Serving a Vaisya or Sudra. i. 7. 12-13.
16. Untruthfulness towards a Brahman. i. 7. 15.
17. Selling certain articles. i. 8. 1-2. and
18. Laziness. i. 8. 6.

"Great restrictions are also placed upon the occupations that a Brahman is allowed to follow; and serving in temples is added to the list of degrading professions. Trade, however, is permitted in times of distress." Sins and crimes are not distinguished in our Brahmana, but certain acts were supposed to require an expiation, and certain others were supposed to have a magical effect. Various facts seem to make it clear that the community was in a nomad state not under a king, as at the time of the *Dharma Shashtra* ordeals seem to have been trusted more than witnesses.

A good deal of space is given to the manufacture of amulets and the performance of magical ceremonies to destroy enemies. Sacrifices were offered with the view of forming, for the performers, new bodies in the 'other world', a process not very unlike the building of a house. "Of worship and sacrifice, as Europeans and Semitic races understand the words, there is absolutely, nothing," says Dr. Burnell. "These so-called sacrifices are also complicated with much recital of verses and subsidiary rites to secure to the performer abundance of wealth, food, cattle, good luck, &c., and are therefore of precisely the same character as the magical ceremonies described in the Samavidhana Brahmana. But apart from this and the Chapters of the Shadvinsha Brahmana and the Kausika Sutra, which treat of omens and portents, there are innumerable instances of similar ceremonies. The Atharva Veda is full of magical verses, some to remove disease, cause hair to grow on bald heads, and to abate the nuisance caused by vermin . . . The incredible filthiness of some of these symbolical and magical rites is almost beyond belief, and the first part of the Aitareya-Aranyaka rivals the most obscene Tantras of the worshippers of Shakti."\*

The elements of Astrology, intimately allied to magic, are met with in the Samavidhana Brahmana in the directions given concerning the seasons and constellations when sacrifices were to be performed; and many of the best known magical practices said to have been used in former times in Europe are recognizable in the Samavidhana. One of the most remarkable of these, known to this day in the

---

\* Burnell, p. xxiii.



darkest parts of Europe, is that of making a wax figure, which is melted over or near a slow fire, so causing the death of an enemy whose life wastes as the image wastes away. This was known to the Romans (Horace, Ep. 17, 76) and also to the Germans and other European races. According to the Samavidhana "the image of the person to be destroyed or afflicted is made of dough and roasted, so as to cause the moisture to exude and then cut in pieces and eaten by the sorcerer. So also we find here amulets and other means of obtaining power over persons, such as love charms, and talismans to preserve the wearer not only against misfortune, but also against attacks of enemies and of animals, such as snakes. But the peculiar importance of the Samavidhana Brahmana is that it contains a complete view of the Indian superstitions, drawn up at a time when they were extensively practised," and believed in.\* These superstitions affected even the sacrifices which could only be performed during the summer solstice, and the funeral ceremonies and other domestic rites, which could be performed only in the bright fortnight. In the Sāmavidhana, besides the Pitris or Manes, and the pishācas or ghosts, there are the Apsaras, Rākshasas and similar imaginary beings. The mentioning of certain things, the boasting of one's luck, &c., were regarded as unlucky, as apt to excite malicious beings into sinister activities.

This, our third Brahmana of the Sama Veda, contains a rich store of legends indicative of the gradual development of Brahmanical theology. The reference to "Krishna Devakiputra" is significant. "Here he is yet but a scholar, eager in the pursuit of knowledge, belonging perhaps to the military caste. He certainly must have distinguished himself in some way or other, however little we know of it, otherwise his elevation to the rank of deity, brought about by external circumstances, would be inexplicable." In a foot note Weber expresses the opinion that mythical relations to Indra, &c., are at the root of this elevation. "Krishna worship proper i. e., the sectarian worship of Krishna as the one God, probably attained its perfection through the influence of Christianity."

In the Aranyaka of this Brahmana we find for the first time in Sanskrit literature the doctrine of the transmigration of souls and that in a tolerably complete form; and here also for the first time in Vedic literature the name of Rāhu, the eclipse monster; circumstances regarded as evidence of the comparatively recent date of its composition.

The *Vansha* Brahmana is of little or no interest from our point of view. It is but a brief tractate, consisting of the names of the various professors or teachers (*Acharyas*) of the Sama Veda, together with those of their predecessors back to the founders or

\* Burnell, p. xxvi.

original teachers or Brahma. These names are arranged in three different series. The first contains 35 names beginning with Brahma and ending with Amābashwa and Radha. From these two originated two different schools. With Amābashwa originated the Ansu School and with Radha the Govila School. The second series contains 27 names, beginning with Ansu and ending with Sarbadatta. All these belong to the Ansu School. The third series contains 14 names, beginning with Govila and ending with Nayana. These 14 belong to the Govila School.

Here we have no ritual, nor philology, nor mythology, yet the Vansha Brahmana forms one of the eight named and annotated as Brahmanas by Sayana. It is a mere roll book of the heads of the Sama-Veda teachers or heads of schools from the beginning down to the writer of the tractate, with a salutation to them all.

The *Arsheya* Brahmana is also practically an index of the contents to the Sama Veda, and as such might be called an Anukramani, composed with the view of helping the memory in the reciting of the various chants or samans of which it consisted. It is however the only Anukramani that is regarded as a Brahmana. It is simpler in plan than the other Anukramanis. According to Dr. Burnell, "like all the literature of the Sama Veda, it is arid to the last degree; and except for the evidence it furnishes as to the reduction of the Sama Veda and the philological interest belonging to a string of old names, it is devoid of value." It of course claims to be supernatural and of fabulous age. It however belongs to the rahmana period.

Eight Brahmanas of the Sama Veda are mentioned by Kumāṛila Bhatta in the 7th century A. D., but there is no certainty as to whether these were those named above. The earliest authentic evidence is that of Sayana's commentaries in the 14th century.

This may be the proper time to emphasize the place music has in the Sama Veda and its Brahmanas as seen from the old Indian point of view. Europeans generally, when thinking of these old compositions, think of them as they do of the Rig Veda and its Brahmanas, that is exclusively of the words as vehicles of thought, not so did the old Indian. To him the Sama Veda and its Brahmanas were valuable for their Samans, that is their tunes or chants. The words were there, but they occupied a very subordinate place. It was the tunes, melodies or chants, to which these words were sung, which gave value and importance to the whole; and, as is the case with European tunes and chants, each had its own name; and curious names some of these were, such as Devil-Killer, Cow's milk, Rudra's bulls, &c., "most comical," Dr. Burnell remarks, "as applied to sacred chants." Some names are those of the composers or of the families of such, or the founders of tribes or of schools. The Samans, as we heard a great Italian violinist remark of

the Hindu music sung or played by the Tagores of Calcutta, are of the order of the Gregorian or Plain Chant. "The Sâman, however being the older and less cultivated, one occasionally meets with passages which are forbidden by the rules of the Plain Chant, and are to a foreigner's ear, by no means pleasing." (Burnell).

It is to be remembered then that the '*Saman*' is a tune, chant or melody, sung to words in prose or poetry, in a way minutely described; and '*ganas*' are collections of such tunes and words arranged according to the purposes for which they were intended.

The Sama Veda has for this reason been called the 'incantamenta' of ancient India, as "the best preserved record of a phase of belief of which we find traces in the histories of the civilization of all nations." Our word 'incantation' is still a witness to the ascription of a magical effect to music among the Latins. "The Germans held the same belief."

Sayana's commentary of this Brahmana is not of much value, hence Burnell gives but a few extracts from it; and adds that the "Mahabrahmana is so jejune that it is hardly worth while to swell the notes by quotations" from it.

The *Devatâdhyâya* Brahmana, including the old and new portions, consists of four short sections, the first of which alone deserves the name, as there we find three rules with examples for the ascertaining of the deities of the Sama verses chanted. This is made to depend on the chorus of the chant which forms the finale of each Sâma. The section closes with a short upanishad or mystic doctrine, as other Brahmanas do.

The second section contains "an enumeration of the colours of the different verses." On this Dr. Burnell notes that "the meaning of such passages which are not rare in Sanskrit-literature is hard to find; at first sight they appear to refer to personifications for the purposes of meditation, such as were used to a surprising extent by the later Buddhists. Such details are, no doubt, relatively recent, but I think that a distinction must be made between passages like this which occur in Vedic works and the apparently similar passages in the Tantras. The whole Indian literature is characterised by such minute, though wholly fanciful details; but their object in vedic works seems to be different from that of the later Tantras. In the first, knowledge is literally the same as power, and is supposed to give its possessor real influence and creative faculty; and the more extensive and accurate a priest's knowledge is, the greater his power is supposed to be. In the last, faith intervenes as an important element of religion, and these details are regarded merely as helps to meditation. The phrase *Ya evam veda* and the word *Vidyâ*, which perpetually occur in Vedic works but are unknown in later literature, mark this distinction very clearly.

In the Tantric works mystic union with a deity is the chief object to be attained, as the worshipper is thus protected and aided."

Dr. Burnell gathers from references in the third chapter to the four yugas or ages of the world, (the only reference in the whole Vedic literature to them) and to a 'day of Brahma,' such as is found in Mann's Institutes, and the Buddhistic character of the concluding words of the section, that it cannot be earlier than the early centuries A. D., when Brahman and Buddhistic doctrines had thoroughly interpenetrated,—the age of Jatakas and reminiscences of former births. "The old Vedic religion taught the creation of a new body for the sacrificer by means of religious rites. It knew nothing of final *nirvana* or *moxa*, a release from all works. The knowledge here promised is the object of rites in the last part of the Sāmavidhāna (iii., 7. 1), but nearly all the Sāma Brahmanas show traces of Buddhist influence and belong to an effete age."

He therefore concludes that, though it contains an old fragment or two, it cannot be put down at a higher date than the 4th century A. D.

The *Sanhito-Upanishad Brahmana* consists of a single chapter in five brief sections. Dr. Burnell remarks that from a literary point of view the text is worthless, but that the first three sections furnish some interesting information, "more especially" "the first traces of the systematic study of the Saman or chant." In his "*Andria Grammarians*" pp. 26, 34, &c., Dr. Burnell has shown that "the beginnings of all Indian science are to be sought for in the Brahmanas."

"The first section treats of the fancied effects of recitation in different ways. The second and third sections show the first stage in the process of analysis of the relation between the Saman and the words, subsequently so developed that nothing like it can anywhere be found. Chimerical effects are attributed to musical peculiarities in the chant." "The fourth section," Dr. Burnell states, "is brief, and that is the only merit that can be attributed to it, for it is on the never failing topic of the merit of particular presents to a religious teacher. Disquisitions of this kind abound *ad nauseam* in Sanskrit literature of all periods, and exhibit a strange phase of the Hindu mind. To a foreigner it is simply impossible to understand how men who could occupy themselves in grammatical analysis and metaphysics with such success as has been done in India could condescend to such puerilities as imagining the effects of all kinds of presents from a paltry mess of gruel up to impossible sums of money. . . . The most perfunctory observation of actual fact would soon have dispelled such illusions as occur in this section, but they command belief even in the present day. The last section is pure mysticism, to most of which it seems impossible to attach any precise meaning."

Of the *Jaiminiya* or *Talavakāra*-Brahmana of which the Kena Upanishad formed a part, Prof. W. D. Whitney writes\* :—"The *Jaiminiya* is on the whole a dull and uninteresting work, as compared with the others of its class. A most unreasonable share of its immense mass is taken up with telling on what occasion some being 'saw' a particular *sāman*, and 'praised with it', thereby attaining certain desired ends, which may be attained by others that will follow his example; and the *pseudo*-legends, thus reported or fabricated, average of a degree of flatness and artificiality quite below the ordinary. Of course there are extensive passages of a different character; and also some of the stock legendary material of the Brahmana period appears here in a new setting, or a different version, or both. Decidedly the most interesting case of the latter kind, so far as I have observed, is the passage which, with a true insight, Burnell himself selected and published in 1878 as a specimen," under the heading "A Legend from the *Talavakāra* or *Jaiminiya* Brahmana" at Mangalore in 1878 (pp. 40, 24mo). It is also included in the Acts of the International Congress at Florence, Vol. ii. pp. 97—111.

After reproducing the *Jaiminiya* version of the Chyavana legend, which will be found below among our extracts concerning Indra, Prof. Whitney adds :—"Whatever may be thought respecting the extract already published by Burnell, it will hardly be denied that this story wears a less original aspect than the corresponding one (or ones) in the other Brahmanas. . . . The pervading accordance of the various Brahmanas in language, style and contents is the most striking fact about them. They evidently come in the main out of one period and their differences appear to be of minor consequence. . . . In point of language the *Jaiminiya* stands fully upon the general plane of the Brahmanas, offering no signs either of special antiquity or of more modern date."

The Keno Upanishad was for a long time regarded the only remnant of the 4th Brahmana extant. The fact that it was translated by Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, the founder of the Brahmo Somaj, adds to its interest. It is divided into two parts, the first of which treats of the existence of the Supreme Being, Brahma, giving as its authority "the earlier sages who have taught us this." The second part contains an account of a mediator between God and man, corresponding to the Roman Catholic idea of the Virgin Mary. She is *Uma Haimavati*, who is afterwards known as the wife of *Siva*. She is represented as "mediatrix between Brahma and the other gods, probably because she is imagined to be identical with *Sarasvati*, or *Vach*, the goddess of speech, of the creative word."

---

\* In a paper on the *Talavakāra* read before the American Oriental Society, Boston, U. S. A., May 1892.

The *Mantra Brahmana* is wholly in metrical form (hence the name) and almost altogether in the form of addresses or prayers—the connecting links being so sparingly given that the Editor continually refers to the Gobhila's *Grihya Sutra* for the necessary explanation. It is divided into two *Prapatakas* or Books, each of which is sub-divided into eight *Khandas* or chapters. The first of these Books gives the *Mantras* connected with the marriage ceremony, the taking of the bride to the bridegroom's house, the conception, quickening and birth of the first male child, the shaving of his head by the village barber, the adorning of him with the sacred thread, the placing of him as a student or *Brahmacharin* with a *Guru* or teacher, and under the care of the god *Stick* or *Danda* for protection. The book ends with his consigning his cows to the care of the god *Pushan*, thanking his divine weapon, the *Stick* or *Club*, for its providing grass for his cattle, which he also addresses in prayer, asking them to increase in number, so that he may have more milk in future. It contains much that is obscene.

The mantras given in Book II. partake more of the nature of the teaching found in the *Aranyakas* or *Upanishads*; and both it and the first book give unmistakable evidence of their being not so old as some of the other *Brahmanas*. It begins with invocations and prayers to the snakes of the four quarters, to the earth, to *Rudra*, *Indra* and the seasons, asking for long life, rice, air, fire, and that when he does die he may not again be cooped up in a body; he calls on his soul to sing the praise of him who gave him rice to eat.

He then gives rice pudding to *Yama* that he may protect his cows and give him a good reputation. He offers a goat and asks for cows, goats, camels, buffaloes, &c. From *Usha* he asks for long life to his children.

With *pindas*, cloths and water, he worships his ancestors; and commits himself to the care of that great spirit that pervades the three worlds, *Para-Brahma*, that all-pervading, formless being which rests upon the whole universe; and he asks to be equitable like the sun, glorious like fire, powerful like the wind, sweet-scented like the moon and intelligent like *Brahaspati*. He also salutes *Rudra*, *Brahma* and *Surya*.

He seeks to be delivered from idleness and worships *Bisrava*. Before leaving his bed in the morning he addresses the sun to make him illustrious among all the three castes. He further asks those gods and goddesses who left him at night to come back and take possession of him during the day-time. He asks the sun god to restore to him the powers lost at night and offers him *ghee*, so that he may get up with its rising and not stop from work before its setting.

He now worships his household deities and asks for disciples

from distant and different quarters. He makes an offering to the sun and moon, praying for power to bring men under his control; and, in correction of some current views, remarks that "only fools say that you, Sun, have your other side dark; but I assert that you are lighted on the other side." He offers and asks for eatables for night and day. He then takes his Club or Stick and prays to it to protect him from his enemies.

By means of drugs he destroys all worms within time. He then goes to his meal, squats upon his matted Kusa-grass after washing his feet, and partakes of eatables duly named.

The Brahmana ends with the prayer that Aryans, and especially wise Aryans, be preserved from killing cows.\*

### III. The Black Yajur-Veda† (*Taittiriya*) Brahmana.

To this Veda belongs only the *Taittiriya-Brahmana*. It was edited by Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, in the *Bibliotheca-Indica*. Forming part of it are the *Taittiriya-Aranyaka*, and the *Taittiriya-Upanishad*, the first of which was also edited by Dr. Mitra in the *Bibliotheca-Indica*.

The *Taittiriya Brahmana* is divided into three Kandas or Books, of which the first is sub-divided into eight chapters, which in their turn are further sub-divided into many sections called *anuvakas*. The second and third Kanda are sub-divided into nine *anuvakas* each; and each *anuvaka* is devoted to a separate series of rituals, including

\* Pandit Satyavrata Samasarami published the Mantra Brahmana in the Hindu Commentator in 1872, with a Sanskrit Commentary and a Bengali translation. This text was severely criticised by Prof. Kuener in his excellent edition of the Gobhila Grihya Sutras in 1864; and the pundit, acknowledging the defects of his first edition (though he says he never saw Prof. Kuener's criticism) published an improved edition in his journal *Usha* (the Dawn). In it he explains that the real Brahmana of the Kanthumas consisted, like the Satapatha Brahmana, of forty Adhyayas. The Prandha consists of 25, the Sadvinsha of 5. These 30 are devoted to Sranta ceremonies, and form one whole. Then follows the Mantra-Brahmana, consisting of two Adhyayas, devoted to Grihya ceremonies, and lastly the Upanishad, consisting of eight Adhyayas or Prapathakas, making 40 in all. The remaining five Brahmanas are treated by P. Samasarami as Anu-Brahmanas. The Mantra-Brahmana is pre-supposed by the Gobhila Grihya Sutras—but it was regarded as so very sacred by the Sakha (or School of Brahmins) to which it belonged that it was kept so secret that Western Orientalists regarded it as for ever lost. But when the Duke of Edinburgh visited India in 1869-70 the natives of India manifested great loyalty, and among other things allowed him to enter an orthodox Hindu Zenana, and to hear our Pundit chant, as a Saman, the Mantra Brahmana, with the result that torrents of abuse were poured upon the heads of the householder and of the Pundit, and shortly after the eyes of the profane were allowed to feast upon the long lost Mantra Brahmana. This is what Prof. Max Müller calls "a curious discovery." See the Pundit's Periodical called *Usha* or *Dawn*, Month Shravan, 1812, Sak. (July-August 1889); and the *Academy*, June 7, 1890.

† The Ezur Veda of the Jesuits was an imitation of this Veda. An able article on it by Mr. F. Ellis was published in the Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society.

he entire circle of the ancient domestic sacrifices. In addition to these there is appended an Aranyaka and an upanishad.

The first Kanda gives an account of the rituals connected with the establishment of the household fire. Then follow in succession the rituals connected with the bringing in of the cattle and milking them, the oblation of fermented Soma juice and co-ordinate and subsidiary rituals, and ending with the coronation sacrifices.

The second Kanda ends the continuation of the coronation ceremony, but it is chiefly devoted to the fire sacrifices, known as Agnihotra, including invocations to a number of divinities, and a special story of the creation of man, &c. and of the origin of the word *Swaha* and of the sacrifice called Agnihotra.

The third Kanda treats of the constellations, rituals of the waning and waxing moon, and full and new moon, human sacrifices, and those of special animals, expiations connected with defects, the horse sacrifice and a number of other oblations.

Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, to give, as he says, "an idea of the jejune character of the myths" of this Brahmana, cites in his Introduction, the following explanation of why a cow immediately on calving should not be milked.

"Certain descendants of Angira, the expounder of the 4th Veda, had a lean white milch cow, which for want of grass lived on the pressed stalks of the Soma vine. The sight of this grieved the owners much, and they performed a sacrifice which brought on plenteous rain, every drop of which grew up into nutritious vegetables. The Pitris besmeared them with poison when the cow was affected, and appeared diseased before the sacrificers. They enquired who had caused the evil, whereupon the Pitris said, 'We, co-sharers of the ceremony, have caused this.' The sacrificers then gave a share of the sacrifice to the Pitris who benignantly removed the poison. When the cow was fattened by profusion of fodder, the calf was let loose and requested by the sacrificers to drink a little milk and leave the rest for sacrifice. The calf refused to do so unless they would engage to milk the cow for the first ten days after calving, and to allow the calf to suck for a period equal to one-fifth of the day or night after the morning and evening milking. The calf which drinks for a longer period is cursed by Rudra."\*

The above and the story of the creation which will be found under the heading *Creation*, are the only specimens Dr. Mitra gives of this Brahmana in his Introduction to it.

The Yajur-Veda has come down to us in two parts or forms—the one called the Black or Dark Yajus, the other the White or Bright Yajus. The matter is practically common, but the arrangement very materially differs. In the Black Yajus the sacrificial formulas, their explanations and the account given of their ceremonials are all rendered as one connected whole, and evidently contemporaneous as to their origin, all following close upon the hymns or Mantras, the *Sanhita* proper—to which they form a true supplement. In the White Yajus, on the other hand, the formulas,

\* Weber's *History of Indian Literature*, p. 71.

† *Ibid*, p. 74.



and their explanations and ritual are entirely separated from one another, the first being assigned to the Sanhita, and their explanation and ritual to the Brahmana, as in the Rig- and Sama-Vedas. Thus it will be seen that each of the two forms of the Yajur Veda has quite independent Brahmanas. Tradition and internal evidence bear upon the schism. The ancient Yajur Veda school of priests was known as Charaka. The word is used, because of this schism, as a term of reproach. In a list preserved of people who are to be sacrificed at the Purusha-medha, is found the name Charaka-Acharya, the teacher of the Charakas, as the proper victim to be offered to Dushkrita or Sin. "This passage," as Max Müller remarks,\* "together with similar hostile expressions in the Satapatha Brahmana, was evidently dictated by a feeling of animosity against the ancient Schools of the Adhvaryus."

The writers of the different Brahmanas were divided into differing and frequently opposing schools, amounting as we have just seen to direct enmity. Those of the Black Yajus manifested real hostility to those of the White Yajus; and the feeling was returned with interest. The former were called Taittiriya, a name to explain which it is said that the pupils of this school of priests were transformed into partridges (*tittiri*) in order to pick up the Yajus-verses disgorged by one of their companions who was wroth with his teacher. Weber thinks the legend originated in the nature of the Black Yajus, which is "a motley undigested jumble of different pieces, represented in the story by the variegated appearance of the partridge." Another of the principal schools of the Black Yajus is supposed to owe its name Khândikiyas, to the same fact that the Black Yajus is made up of *Khândas*, fragments. The White (*Sukla* or *Suddha*) is on the other hand so called either because the Mantras and Brahmanas are so clearly distinguished from one another, or because the Mantras had been cleared and separated from the Brahmanas, and thus the whole made more lucid and intelligible, as contrasted with the Black (*Krishna*) in which the verses and Brahmanas proper are mixed together and consequently less intelligible. The Kâthaka is the only work of the Brahmana order mentioned by name by the great Sanskrit writers as belonging to this school of the Black Yajus.

The Brahmana portion of the works of the Apastamba School is "extremely meagre as regards the ritual, and gives but an imperfect picture of it. It is however peculiarly rich in legends of a mythological character."

Among the legends of the Maitra Brahmana of the Black Yajus is that of King Brihad-ratha, who, penetrated by the nothingness of earthly things, resigned the sovereignty into the hands of his son, and devoted himself to contemplation, is there instructed

by Sakayanya upon the relation of the soul to the world. Sakayana communicates to him what Maitreya had said upon this subject. The Brihadratha here mentioned is identified with Brihadratha, King of Magadha, who according to the Mahabharat (ii. 756), gave up the sovereignty to his son Jarásamdhya (afterwards slain by the Pandus) and retired to the wood of penance. On this Weber remarks—"I cannot forbear connecting with the instruction here stated to have been given to a king of Magadha by a Sākāyanya the fact that it was precisely in Magadha that Buddhism, the doctrine of Sakyamuni, found a welcome. I would even go so far as to conjecture that we have here a Brahmanical legend about Sakyamuni... Maitreya, it is well known, is with the Buddhists the name of the future Buddha, yet in their legends the name is also often directly connected with their Sakyamuni. Having reference to the reading of the Buddhists concerning transmigration, the two facts are not at all inconsistent with one another."

The doctrine of the Maitra Upanishad is in close connection with the opinions of the Buddhists, although from its Brahmanical origin it is naturally altogether free from the dogmas and mythologies peculiar to Buddhism. At the present time there are Maitra Brahmans living near Bhadgaon, at the foot of the Vindhya, with whom other Brahmans do not eat in common; 'the reason may have been the very early Buddhist tendencies of many of them'.

A large number of the Brahmanas of the Black Yajus are known only by quotations from them which are occasionally met with in other works.

As the Upanishad of this Brahmana partakes a good deal of the character of an ordinary Brahmana, its opening words may be quoted as of special interest as giving the original meaning of Om, the most sacred word in Hinduism. They run thus:—

"Let a man meditate on the syllable Om, called the *Udgitha*, for the *Udgitha* (a portion of the Sama-Veda) is sung, beginning with Om. The full account however, of Om is this:—The essence of all things is the earth. The essence of the earth, is water, the essence of water the plants, the essence of plants man, the essence of man speech, the essence of speech the Rig-Veda, the essence of the Rig-Veda the Sama-Veda, the essence of the Sama-Veda the *Udgitha* (which is Om). That *Udgitha* is the best of all essences, the highest, deserving the highest place, the eighth. What then is the *Rik*? What is the *Sāman*? What is the *Udgitha*? This is the question. The *Rik* indeed is speech, *Sāman* is breath, the *Udgitha* is the syllable Om. Now speech and breath, or *Rik* and *Sāman* form one couple, and that couple is joined together to the syllable Om. When two people come together, they fulfil each other's desire. Thus he who knowing this meditates on the syllable Om, the *Udgitha* becomes indeed a gratifier of desires. That syllable is a syllable of permission, for whenever we permit anything we say Om, yes. Now permission is ratification. He who knowing this meditates on the syllable Om, the *Udgitha*, becomes indeed a gratifier of desires. By that syllable does the threefold knowledge (the Sacrifice) proceed. When the priest gives an order, he says Om: when the priest recites, he says Om; when the priest sings, he says Om, all for the glory of that syllable," &c., &c.

#### IV. The White Yajur Veda (*Vajasaneyi-Sanhita*) Brahmanas

To this Veda belongs the *Satapatha Brahmana* which was edited by Weber, Berlin 1855 (see Max Müller's *Hist. of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 349-360) and translated down to Book vii.

The *Satapatha Brahmana*.

by Prof. Eggeling in the *S. B. E.*, vols. xii., xxvi., xli. leaving the remaining Books to appear in vols. xliii. and xlii. This Veda is called *Vajasaneyi-Sanhita* (contracted *Vaj.S.* after Vajnavalkya Vajasaneyi).

The *Satapatha* (or 100 path) Brahmana, so-called because it consists of 100 *paths* or sections, each called a Brahmana, is the best known, the most important and most significant of all the Brahmanas, and it is also regarded as one of the most modern of all the Vedas. The first nine books or *Kandas* continually refer to the first 18 books of the White Yajus *Sanhita*, and are indeed regarded as a running commentary upon them. The sacrifices of the Vedas are divided into three classes, which stand out very markedly from one another, the Soma sacrifices, the animal sacrifices and the *havir-yagnas* or offerings of milk, butter, grain, food, &c. Books I and II of the *Satapatha Brahmana* treat of the last of these three. Hence the first chapter gives an account of the vow of abstinence from certain kinds of food, especially meat, and from other carnal pleasures. Near the close of Book first we have the disgusting legend of *Prajapati* and Dawn and the well-known story of *Ida* or the horned fish and the Deluge.

Books iii and iv. treat of the ordinary forms of the soma sacrifice, the most sacred of the Vedic sacrificial rites. It includes in it an account of the animal sacrifices, as these latter, though occupying an independent position of their own, were also included as parts of the Soma sacrifices, and as such of minor importance.

In the 4th Book, the 5th chap. and 2nd section, there is a full account of the sacrifice of the "Barren Cow," which includes a discussion of the sacrifice of a cow in calf.

Book v. is taken up with the two great sacrifices of *Vājapeya* and *Rājasūya* or inauguration of a King. The former may be translated the sacrifice of the 'Drink of strength' or 'race cup.'

Book vi. and vii., while treating of the building of the fire altar, includes a discussion on animal sacrifices; with curious reflections on gold leaf, gold man and gold child, and the tortoise as representing heaven, air and earth. The victims specially dwelt upon are he-goats and rams, whose death is brought about in a most barbarous and cruel fashion. But the great feature of all these sacrifices is the Soma, a survival of Totemism and Sabatism welded together.

Book xii. called *Sautramani*, treats of *Prayaschitta* or penance in general (treated in the last chapter of *Aitareya Brahmana*), while Book xiii. called the *Asvamedha*, treats at some length of the horse

sacrifice though in a much more superficial manner than some other sacrifices; and then with extreme brevity the Purusha-medha or human sacrifice, the universal sacrifice and the sacrifice to the ancestors. The last six chapters are of a purely speculative and legendary character, and form by themselves a distinct work, or Upanishad under the name of *Vrihad-Aranyaka*, a circumstance leading to the conclusion that it is of much more recent origin than the earlier chapters. We arrive at the same conclusion from the fact that the legends met with in these latter chapters are mostly of an historical character, and are chiefly connected with individual teachers, who cannot have lived at a time very distant from that of the legends themselves. In the earlier chapters on the contrary, the legends are mostly of a mythological character, or if historical, refer principally to occurrences belonging to remote antiquity. King Janamejaya, who figures so largely in the Mahabharat, is mentioned here for the first time, in a passage from which we learn that the care taken of his horses had passed into a proverb. Here also Rudra for the first time is called Mahadeva. In the 11th Book frequent mention is made, and for the first time, of Janaka, King (*Samraj*) of Videha, as the patron of Yajnavalkya. All these circumstances and many others go to show the comparatively recent origin of these latter chapters.

The 14th Book\* contains a legend concerning a contention among the gods, in which Vishnu came off victorious; whence it became customary to say 'Vishnu is the luckiest (*śreshtha*) of the gods.' This is the first time that we find Vishnu brought into such prominence; he otherwise appears only in the legend of the three strides, and as the representative of the sacrifice itself,—a position which is, in fact, ascribed to him here also. Indra, as here related, afterwards strikes off his head in jealousy. This story is however differently told: The gods send forth ants to gnaw the bowstring of Vishnu, who stands leaning on his bended bow; the string snapping and springing upwards, severs his head from his body. The same legend recurs in the parallel passages of the Taitt. Aranyaka and Panch. Brahmana.

The aim of the *Yājñavalkya-Kānda* is the glorification of Yajnavalkya, and it recounts how, at the court of his patron Janaka, King of Videha, he silenced all the Brahmans of the Kurupanchalas, &c., and gained his patron's full confidence (see Book xii of the Mahabharat). Mention is made of Yajnavalkya's two wives, Maitreyi and Kātyāyanī for the first time in the eighth Brahmana of the preceding Book.†

"The legends interspersed in such numbers throughout the Satapatha Brahmana have a special significance. In some of them",

\* Book XIV is the *Vrihad-Aranyaka*, edited and translated by Roer in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*.

† Weber's *Hia.* p. 126. see note.

Weber\* remarks, "the language is extremely antiquated, and it is probable, therefore that before their incorporation into it they possessed an independent form." These

The Sat. P. Brahmana  
Legends and the Maha-  
bharat.

include the legends of the Deluge and the rescue of Manu, the restoration to youth of Chyavana by the Asvins at the request of his wife Sukanya, of the love and separation of Purúravas and Urvasî, and several others. "Many of them reappear as episodes in the Mahabharat in a metrical garb and often very much altered. It is obvious that we have here a much more intimate connection with the epic than exists in the other Brahmanas." We find the explanation in the fact that "this Brahmana substantially originated and attained its final shape among the tribes of the Kurupanchalas and the neighbouring Kosala-Videhas. The King of the latter, Janaka, who is represented in it as the chief patron of the sacred doctrine it embodies, bears the same name as the father of Sita and father-in-law of Rama, in the Rámáyana. This is, however, the only point of contact with the Rámáyana legend which can here be traced, and as the name Janaka seems to have belonged to the whole family, it also virtually disappears. Nevertheless, I am inclined," continues Prof. Weber, "to identify the father of Sita with this exceptionally holy Janaka, being of opinion that Sita herself is a mere abstraction, and that consequently she had assigned to her the most renowned father possible. As regards the special relation in which the Brahmana stands to the legend of the Mahabharata, Lassen, it is well known, takes as the fundamental feature of the latter a conflict between the Kurus and the Panchalas, ending in their mutual annihilation, the latter being led by the family of the Pandus, who came from the West. Now at the time of the Brahmana, we find the Kurus and the Panchalas still in full prosperity and also united in the closest bonds of friendship as one people. Consequently this internecine strife cannot yet have taken place. On the other hand in the latest portions of the Brahmana, we find the prosperity, the sin, the expiation, and the fall of Janamejaya Párikshita and his brothers Bhimasena, Ugrasena and Śrutasena, and of the whole family of the Párikshitas, apparently still fresh in the memory of the people and discussed as a subject of controversy. In the Mahabharata boundless confusion prevails regarding these names. Janamejaya and his brothers are represented either as great-grandsons of Kuru, or else as the great-grandsons of the Panduid Arjuna, at whose snake sacrifice Visampáyana related the history of the great struggle between the Kurus and the Pándus. Adopting the latter view, which appears to be the better warranted, from the fact that the part of the Mahabharat, which contains it, is written in prose,

\* Weber p. 143.

and exhibits a peculiarly ancient garb,—the supposed great internecine conflict between the Kurus and the Pañchalas, and the domination of the Pandavas must have been long past at the time of the Brahmana. How is this contradiction to be explained? That something great and marvellous had happened in the family of the Párikshitas, and that their end still excited astonishment at the time of the Brahmana has already been stated. But what it was we know not. After what has been said above, it can hardly have been the overthrow of the Kurus by the Panchalas; but at any rate it must have been deeds of guilt; and indeed I am inclined to regard this as yet unknown 'something' as the basis of the legend of the Mahabharat.\*

"To me it appears absolutely necessary to assume, with Lassen, that the Pandavas did not originally belong to the legend, but were only associated with it at a later time, for not only is there no trace of them anywhere in the Brahmanas or Sutras, but the name of their chief hero, Arjuna (Phalguna), is still employed here, in the Satapatha Brahmana (and in the Sanhita) as a name of Indra; indeed he is probably to be looked upon as originally identical with Indra and therefore destitute of any real existence. Lassen further concludes from what Megasthenes reports of the Indian Heracles,† his sons and his daughter Pandaia and also from other accounts in Curtius, Pliny and Ptolemy, that at the time when Megasthenes wrote, the mythical association of Krishna (?) with the Pandavas already existed.‡ But this conclusion, although perhaps in itself probable, is at least not certain;§ and even if it were, it would not prove that the Pandavas were at that time already associated with the legend of the Kurus. And if we have really to assign the arrangement of the Madhyamdina recension to about the time of Megasthenes, it may reasonably be inferred from the lack of all mention of the Pandavas in it, that their association with the Kurus had not then been established, although, strictly speaking, this conclusion has weight, not so much for the period when the arrangement of the work actually took place, as for the time to which the pieces arranged belong.

"As with the epic legends, so also do we find in the Satapatha

\* See the story of the Brahman's curse of Vriddhadyumna for his improper sacrifice: (Ait. Br. iii. 48).

† The incest of Hercules with Pandaia must certainly be traced, says Weber, to the incest of Prajapati and his daughter, so often touched on in the Brahmanas.

‡ Curtius and Pliny wrote in the first, and Ptolemy in the second century. A. D.

§ At the August (1895) meeting of the Buddhist Text Society, an old Burmese picture was exhibited, it is believed, of the original of the Ramayana story, without either Rama or Hanuman, in which Ravana is represented as an Aryan (Iranian) invader of Ceylon from the west, defending his conquest from another Aryan invader from the mainland of the Indian continent. It is now generally admitted, on unquestionable authority, that the *Asuras* of the old Hindus were none other than their brethren of Persia, &c.

Brahmana several points of contact with the legends of the Buddhists on the one hand, and with the later tradition concerning the origin of the Sāṅkhya doctrine on the other...As regards the Buddhist legends the Sākyas of Kapilavastu (whose name may possibly be connected with the Sākāyanins of the tenth *kūṇḍa* and the Sākāyanya of the Maitrayana-Upanishad) called themselves Gautamas, a family name which is particularly often represented among the teachers and in the lists of teachers of the Brahmana. It is moreover the country of the Kosalas and Videhas that is to be looked upon as the cradle of Buddhism :—Śvetaketu son of Aruṇi, one of the teachers most frequently mentioned in the Satapatha Brahmana is with the Buddhists the name of one of the earlier births of Śākyamuni.\* Prof. Weber thinks the use of *Magadha*, *Arhat*, *Sramana*, *Maha-brahmana* and *Pratibuddha*, are also suggestive of Buddhism. "The name Chelaka, also in the Brahmana may possibly have some connection with the peculiarly Buddhist sense attached to the word *chela*. Ajatasatru and Brahma datta, on the contrary, are probably but namesakes of the two persons designated by the Buddhists under these names as contemporaries of Buddha (?). The same probably also applies to the Vatsiputriyas of the Buddhists and the Vatsiputras of the Virh Arany. (v. 5. 31) although this form of name, being uncommon perhaps implies a somewhat closer connection. It is however the family of the Kātyāyanas, Kātyāyaniputras, which we find represented with special frequency among the Buddhists as well as in the Brahmana (although only in its very latest portions). We find the first mention of this name in the person of one of the wives of Yājñavalkya, who is called Kātyāyani....It also appears frequently in the lists of teachers, and almost the whole of the Sūtras, belonging to the White Yajus bear this name, as that of their author: Of these we do not treat.

From all these matters touched upon, it will be seen that the Satapatha, though by no means the oldest, has been found of greatest interest to students.

The **Mandala** Brahmana is attached to the Yajur Veda.

#### V. The Atharva-Veda Brahmana.

*Gopatha-Brahmana*, or the Brahman's Brahmana, but feebly represents the Brahmana stage of Sanskrit literature. The contents are a medley, derived from various sources. Prof. Whitney finds its essential feature in the multitude of incantations which it contains, pronounced either by the person who is himself to be benefited, or, more often, by the sorcerer for him, and directed

---

\* Weber's History of I. L., pp. 134-8.

so the procuring of the greatest variety of desirable ends; such as wealth, health, power, downfall of an enemy, success in love or play, "the removal of petty pests, and so on down to the growth of hair on a bald pate." (*Loc. Cit.* iii. p. 308.) A talisman, such as a necklace, or some wonder-working plant, may be given as the external means. The first half of this Brahmana is essentially of a speculative cosmogonic import, and is particularly rich in legends, a good few of which appears in the Satapatha Brahmana. The first chapter traces the origin of the universe from Brahma; from the fourth section of which it would appear that Atharvan is considered as a Prajapati or king, appointed by Brahma to create and protect subordinate beings; while chap. v. contains remarks identifying *Purusha* with the year, and allusions to the calendar. The second half contains an exposition of various points connected with the *Srauta* ritual, apparently taken from the Aitareya Brahmana. "The Veda," says Madhusudana, "is divided into Rik, Yajush and Saman for the purpose of carrying out the sacrifice, under its three different forms. The duties of the Hotri priests are performed with the Rig-Veda, those of the Adhvaryu priests with the Yajur Veda, those of the Udgatri priests with the Sama Veda. The duties of the Brahman (priests) and the sacrifices are contained in all three. The Atharva-Veda, on the contrary is totally different. It is not used for the sacrifice, but only teaches how to appease, to bless, to curse, &c." Elsewhere, with reference evidently to the sacrifice, the Yajur Veda is called the head, the Rik the right, the Saman the left, the Adesa Upanishad the vital breath, and the Atharvangiras, the tail. Still the Gopatha Brahmana, is a real Brâhmana, written in the same language, breathing the same spirit, and treating of the same sacrifices. MSS. of the Gopatha Brahmana are very scarce. An edition of it was published in the Bibliotheca Indica in 1872. It makes no reference to the Brahman-Veda, but the songs of the Atharvangiras are mentioned under the names of Atharvana-Veda and Angirasa-Veda. "A large portion of the Gopatha-brâhmana is taken up with what is called the Virishta, the Una, Yalayama, or whatever else the defects in a sacrifice are called, which must be made good by certain hymns, verses, formulas, or exclamations. There are long discussions on the proper way of pronouncing these salutary formulas, on their hidden meaning, and their miraculous power. The syllable Om, the so-called Vyâhritis, and other strange sounds are recommended for various purposes, and works such as the Sarpa-Veda, Pischa-Veda, Asura-Veda, Itihâsa-Veda, Purâna-Veda, are referred to as authorities (i. 10.)" M. M's *His.* p. 451. The other Brahmanas deal largely with accidents, defects, &c. and the penances by which their effects are nullified. The treatment of such will be found, for example, in the penultimate book of the Aitareya-brâhmana. The one thing which struck Max Müller as peculiar to the



Gopatha Brāhmaṇa was its account of the creation, which we give below under the head—"Creation."

Its points of agreement and disagreement are sometimes rather amusing, as for example in the story of Vasiṣṭha receiving a special revelation from Indra, common to both the Brāhmaṇa of the Black Yajus and the Gopatha. Both relate that because of this special revelation Vasiṣṭha had always acted as Purohita; but when the former tells how on this account he had further been appointed Brahman or superintending priest or President; the Atharvans say that the office by right belongs to a Bhṛigu or in other words to their representative. It reminds one of the somewhat similar contention between the Judgites and the Besantites in the assemblies of the Theosophists over a so-called revelation from the Pseudo-Mahatmas.

It will be noticed that in our list of Brāhmaṇas we have sometimes inserted the names of both Aranyakas and Upanishads as forming parts of the Brāhmaṇas. There being a volume of this series of "Sacred Books of the East, Described and Examined" given to the examination of the Upanishads, we leave them outside the plan of this volume. As already stated, each Veda has an appendix known as an Aranyaka or 'forest portion,' studied in the forests by ascetics, spoken of by Megasthenes as *Hyllobioi*, a literal translation of the Sanskrit *vana prastha*, 'living in the woods.' Attached to and sometimes regarded as included in these Aranyakas are the Upanishads, the ancient philosophical speculations. As compared with other Sanskrit literature the Aranyakas must be allowed to be nearer in age and character to the Brāhmaṇas proper. They deal sympathetically with sacrifices, which can scarcely be said of the Upanishads. Their object is to show how sacrifices may be performed by a mere mental effort by people living in the forest (ascetics, &c.), without any of the pomp described in the Brāhmaṇas proper. The worshipper had only to imagine the sacrifice, to go through it only in his memory, and thus acquire the same merit as the performer of tedious rites.\*

Alongside of the extraordinary development of ritual and priest-craft, as evidenced in the Brāhmaṇas, the old poetic gift as seen in the Hymns was still producing fruit of various qualities, as found in the Atharva Veda; and there was also going on at the same time, sometimes in friendly alliance and sometimes in deadly antagonism, a most remarkable development of speculative thought to the disparagement and over-shadowing of hymns, gods, and ritual. In the Saṁhitas we have the religion of prayer

\* See Max Müller's A. S. L. pp. 813 f., and Max Müller's *Lect. on Origin and Growth of Religion*. London, 1882.

and praise, in the Brahmanas that of rite and ritualistic observance. The relation of the Brahmanas to the Mantras is compared to that of the Book of Leviticus to the Book of Psalms. A better comparison, we think, is that of the Talmud to the Bible, or the Gemara to the Mishna, among the Jews; or, still better, that of the Zend or Parsi comment to the Avesta or original text. But it must be always borne in mind, as we have more than once already stated, that to the Hindu, Brahmana and Mantra are of equal authority.

Side by side with both these we have, but of less nominal authority, a religion of mere speculation or philosophy, in which the whole pantheon with its hymns is sublimed away into illusion and deception, or into the one eternal all-embracing unconditioned Brahma, in which it is taught that there is something holier and higher, better and more enduring, than the most elaborate sacrifice, horse or human, or the most imposing ritual, and that was to know consciously the great soul of the true and absolute Self, and that the human soul *was it*.

The Brahmins, however, ruled supreme in both rite and speculation with this difference, that in the former they practically held exclusive sway, while in the latter they had powerful competitors among whom Buddha and the founder or the founders of the Jain religion met), including kings and females and even members of the lower castes. The treatises in which these speculations are reserved to us are called Upanishads. They are of various ages, one of them as old as many of the Brahmanas, while others are much younger than the age of Buddha.

While we classify these various works into Sanhitas, Brahmanas and Upanishads, and define them as having very marked characteristics, and as old, older and oldest; yet it is also true that they cannot be separated from one another by any hard and fast line of demarcation. Their development was gradual, extending over many centuries and during much of that time they overlapped one another. Much in the *Brahmana*, for example, is older than the *Sanhita*.

### CHAPTER III.

Generally speaking, the Brahmanas consist of regulations regarding the employment of the mantras in the worship, including especially the various and very numerous sacrifices. They expound the etymology and meaning of the terms used, and the mystical significations of the rites performed, all of which are interspersed with stories or legends illustrating or enforcing these various significations. They consist "for the most part of mystical, historical, mythological, etymological, and theological discussions," of very little interest to the modern reader, Indian or European. If the

Nature of the contents of  
the Brahmanas.

appendages known as Upanishads be taken into consideration, we have also included in the Brâhmanas philosophical explanations of the mysteries of nature. If the mantras be the oldest hymns of the Aryan branch of the human family, the Brâhmanas contain the oldest rituals, the oldest philological notes, the oldest legends or myths, and the oldest philosophical speculations of the Indo-European race. Naturally enough the Brahmanas, composed, as they must have been, by different sets or families (*Charanas* or *Sakas*) of priests, and attached to different Vedas, show a good deal of variety, amounting at times not only to contradictions, but to exhibitions of animosity towards works regarded as heterodox, with the result that most of these works have perished. Still a large number remain.

It is exceedingly difficult, without both entering into great details and giving long unmutilated extracts, to give a correct idea of the contents of the Brahmanas.

There is a story of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's visit to one of the cottages on her estate at Balmoral, and being curious as to the contents of the pot boiling over the fire, asking the old woman who presided, what was in it. The old woman answered that there was such and such "intil't,"—a word which, repeated along with every separate ingredient, completely puzzled the Royal visitor. In answer to similar questions, we would now try to state what is 'intil't' a Brâhmana, and also explain the terms by which the contents are described by Hindu divines. The Brâhmana mess is said to contain six ingredients. There is *vidhi* in it, there is *arthavâda* in it; there are *nindâ* and *samsâ*, as also *purâ-kalpa* and *para-kriti*, in it.

1. *Vidhi*, the first of these, means rules on the performance of particular rites, as to what the priest should do and say. This of course is the *raison d'être* of the Brahmana. It corresponds to the *halakah* of the Jewish priest; the remaining five ingredients in the dish correspond to the Jewish *haggadah*.

2. *Arthavâda*\* means the explanations of the mantras and rites. This is what is called the philosophical ingredient, as in it are found the germs of the various systems of Hindu Philosophy, as also of grammar. It contains fore-shadowings of Pânini's great work. Here also are found anticipations of the monotheism and pantheism of later times, and of *mukti*, or final absorption in the Supreme Being, the Nirvâna of the Hindus.

3. *Nindâ* or 'censure' has reference to the disapproval expressed in regard to certain actions or opinions, in such words as 'This opinion is not to be attended to'—'If such and such action is performed, or if such and such action is not attended to, the sacrificer will die, the sacrificial fire will burn him up.' Censures, disapprovals, warnings in whatever way conveyed, in accounts of controversies, discussions, &c., come all under the class *nindâ*.

---

\* "A Brahmana," says Sâyana in his Introduction to the Rig-Veda, "is two-fold containing either commandments (*vidhi*) or additional explanations (*arthavâda*)."

4. *Samā* is the opposite of *nindā*. It means praise, recommendation, approval, promise that the performance of such and such a rite, *with the proper knowledge*, will secure such and such a blessing. The frequency of the italicised phrase, *ya evam veda*, 'who has such knowledge,' is regarded as the original suggestion of the name *Veda* for the *Sruti* compositions. See above, pp. 5, 24.

5. *Purā-kalpa* (=the performance of rites in olden times), includes in it stories of the fights of the Devas (*Hindus*) and Asuras (*Parsis*), and legends concerning sacrifices performed by the gods. This forms the legendary or *quasi* historical back-ground of the sacrifices and rites described. These legends pre-suppose the fights between the Devas or ancient Indians and the Asuras or Iranians or Parsis, which have been the subjects of myths and legends before the Brāhmanas were collected or compiled. In all these compilations our Parsi friends and their *Ahura-mazda* are denounced as devils, our English translation of *Asuras*, apparently because these Iranians denounced the worship of devas or Brahmanas and attacked their idolatry. Of course these Iranians ordered the compliment by treating, in all their sacred works, the devas as devils.

There remains the sixth ingredient in the cauldron of this Indian broth or hotch-potch to be explained.

6. *Parakṛiti* (achievement or feat of another) includes stories of renowned priests, what successes they accomplished, what gifts they received, what blessings they conferred, and what curses they inflicted. Paragraph follows paragraph like the following:—

"Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit, who possessed this knowledge, said, 'My priests who possess this knowledge made me sacrifice, I who have the same knowledge. Therefore, I am victorious, I conquer a hostile army eager of fighting, neither the divine nor the human arrows coming from such an army can reach me. I shall attain the full age allotted to man (100 years). I shall become master of the whole earth.'" Ait. Br. viii. 11; Haug, ii. p. 514.

"With this inauguration ceremony, Kasyapa inaugurated Visvakarma, the son of Bhuvana. Thence Visvakarma went conquering everywhere over the whole earth up to its ends, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse." p. 524.

"With this ceremony Vasishtha inaugurated Sūdas, the son of Pijavana. Thence Sūdas went conquering everywhere over the whole earth up to its ends, and sacrificed the sacrificial horse." *Ibid*, p. 524.

After reading a string of such paragraphs one feels tempted to cry out 'What jingos these men were!'

Although there is a certain plan discernible in each of these works, and a certain orderly arrangement of matter indicating one author at the first;

yet the curious repetitions of matter, the discrepancies of form, and the frequent interpolations interrupting the context, lead to the conclusion that more than one mind had something to do with them severally. They came down *memoriter* in families of priests, and were added to or subtracted from,

according to the whims or expediences of the family. They worked with practical as well as theoretic ends in view, not only to prepare manuals which would be useful guides at the sacrifice, but to acquire knowledge of and power over the supernatural, as well as over the natural forces of the universe. And they succeeded in making themselves and others believe that they had acquired such knowledge and power, by means of sacrifice, *Vach* or speech, and suitable metre. There is nothing within the bounds or limits of one's desire or even imagination, good or bad, which could not thus be got.

We know nothing of the names or history of the compilers of these Brahmanas, most likely because they are compilations, not by individuals as such, but as we have said, by families of priests, descending through many generations. Their works, however, indicate their characters so far. Their self-complacency is notable. They "felt that whatever they said must be believed, whatever they ordained must be obeyed.\* They are frightened by no absurdity, and the word 'impossible' seems to have been banished from their dictionary . . . There may have been deep wisdom in the Brâhmanas, and their authors may have sincerely believed in all they said; but they evidently calculated on a submissiveness on the part of their pupils, or readers, which only exists in countries domineered over by priests or professors."

The Brâhmanas were fitted, and no doubt intended, to increase the power of the Brahman or priest. By means of the Brahmanas and the Brâhmanas a simple primitive nature-worship was changed into an artificial, complicated, ceremonial or ritualistic religion, requiring for its performance and efficacy various classes of men specially set apart and trained for the service, and ever seeking after and acquiring power over their fellowmen. In this there was nothing strange or new. History informs us of the tendency which religions, good and bad, have manifested in such directions. It is priest-craft. It is so among the most savage; it is also so among the most civilized. In Roman Catholicism we have it in a very highly developed form, with Liturgies and Breviaries, on parallel lines with those of Hinduism and Buddhism, the more remarkable as Jesus the Christ warned His disciples strongly against it, as did also Sâkyamuni, the Buddha. The belief in the efficacy of prayer and sacrifice, once these priests were entrusted with their performance, naturally led to the efficacy being transferred to the performer. His superior education and more constant communion with the Divine and the Supernatural led to the same consummation. Hence we find, even from the hymns used, that the Rishis who composed them—that is the priests or bards—were in most comfortable circumstances as far as the riches of this world can

---

\* Prof. Max Müller's *Hist.*, p. 258.

make men comfortable. The Purohita, the family priest—an institution which has come down to our own day—possessed very extensive power and influence in all families, from the highest to the lowest. On one thing, ancient Sanskrit literature and tradition is clear, that, in the words of Prof. Eggeling, ‘the struggle for social ascendancy between the priesthood and the ruling military class must, in the nature of things, have been of long duration. In the chief literary documents of this period which have come down to us, viz., the Yajur-Veda, the Brāhmanas, and the hymns of the Atharva-Veda, some of which perhaps go back to the time of the later hymns of the Rik, we meet with numerous passages, in which the ambitious claims of the Brahmins are put forward with singular frankness. The powerful personal influence exercised by the Purohitas seems to have largely contributed to the final success of the sacerdotal order.” As an illustration, Prof. Eggeling gives extracts from the Aitareya Brahmana and the Atharva-Veda. We reproduce the former as translated by Dr. Haug:—

“Now about the office of a Purohita. The gods do not eat the food offered by a king who has no Purohita. Thence the king even when (not) intending to bring a sacrifice should appoint a Brahman to the office of house-priest. The king who wishes that the gods might eat his food, has, after having appointed a Purohita, however, the use of the sacred fires which lead to heaven . . . These fires which are fed by the Purohita, which are thus freed from their destructive power, carry, pleased by the wish for sacrificing the Kshatriya (i.e., the military caste) to the heaven-world, and make him obtain the royal dignity, bravery, a kingdom, and subjects to rule over. But if the Kshatriya has no wish for sacrificing by not appointing a Purohita, then the fires get displeased with him, and being not freed from their destructive power, throw him out of the heaven-world, and deprive him of the royal dignity, bravery, his kingdom and subjects over whom he rules. This Agni Vaisvanara, who is the Purohita, is possessed of five destructive powers. With them he surrounds the king for his defence, just as the sea surrounds the earth. The empire of such a ruler will be safe. Neither will he die before the expiration of the full life term; but live up to his old age, and enjoy the full term apportioned for his life. Nor will he die again (for he is free from being born again as a mortal), if he has a Brahman, who possesses such a knowledge, as his Purohita and guardian of his empire; for he obtains by means of his own royal dignity that for another, his son, and that by means of his bravery that of another. The subjects of such a king obey him unanimously and undivided.” Ait. Br. viii. 24-25.

Tradition speaks of sanguinary conflicts between the Brahman and the military caste, which issued in the final overthrow and annihilation of the latter. Without laying much stress on these stories, the fact that the Brahman got to be supreme became evident to all; and the process, in at least one of its forms, is seen in the Brāhmanas which we are considering. Perseverance, superior educational training, a complicated ceremonial, and tenacity of purpose, were probably the chief means by which the Brahmins gained their ends.

## CHAPTER IV.

Much of the European scholar's interest in the Hindu religion lies in the fact that in its sacred writings he can watch its development from the simplest conceptions of nature worship, step by step, to a great priestly ritual, then on to mysticism, intellectualism and asceticism, and in many cases to the rejection of all gods and rites, into a salvation by knowledge, faith or works, or to a pantheistic faith which spurns all salvation as unnecessary.

The change religion underwent. We must remember that the Vedic religion, as the Indo-Aryans moved eastwards into the great Gangetic valley and southwards into the Deccan, changed first into Brahmanism, properly so called—that is, the religion of the *Brahmana* or Vedic mantra, of the *Brahman*, the highest of the four Hindu castes, and of the *Brahmanas*, the priestly manuals. It became the religion of the hereditary priest, and of the mantra or sacred text, and the manual, rather than of the Aryan people and the Vedic hymn-book. The hymns ceased to be understood by either priest or people, and even to be repeated or sung as such by the latter. They came to be regarded as magic or cabalistic words of power, the mere repetition of which effected most stupendous, physical and spiritual changes.

The 'Asuras' of the Hymns had become demons to the Indians, though still gods to the Iranians, and they and all manner of goblins, gods, and ghosts had greatly multiplied; and the great *devas* or gods of the Vedic hymns who became evil demons to the Iranians, had begun to recede into the background, or to occupy a subordinate position among hosts of new gods or demi-gods, or divine heroes, now introduced for the first time, or hitherto occupying but a very subordinate position. Shiva begins to take up a prominent place among the gods, though he is not so much as mentioned in the *Sanhitas*; and Vishnu and Krishna completely change their character. That is, in other words, the Vedic religion began to be corrupted by the incorporation or assimilation of the religions of the aborigines and by a false philosophy; as Muhammadanism in India is at the present day corrupted by modern Hinduism, and by pantheistic and mystic speculations; and as Christianity was in the dark ages.

The worship became much more formal, ritualistic, and complicated. The heaven of the good and the hell of the bad became more distinct and multiplied greatly—many heavens and many hells. The old gods generally deteriorated in morals, and the new ones were still more immoral. Even Varuna is represented as the hostile and cruel god of night and of the waters. The hereditary priest, the man of prayer [*Brahmân*], is alone qualified to celebrate the rites of religion. But he no longer prays; he only says

prayers. The very act of his ritual became deified under the name of *Brahmanaspati*, lord of prayer. His sacrifices grew more and more elaborate, and credited year by year with ever-increasing powers. His religion is not righteousness but ritual. His force or strength lies in properly intoning mantras or hymns, in rightly reciting incantations and charms, in correctly casting horoscopes, in silently muttering ready-made formulas, in testing wonder-working talismans, and in his knowledge of the rites and ceremonies which continued to multiply and abound, until, on the principle of the division of labour, various classes of priests had to be told off for the different kinds of rites, for which they had to be specially instructed from their youth upwards. Schools or *tols* for the training of such were established all over the country. The knowledge conveyed was esoteric, hidden and mystic; and an apprenticeship or probation had to be insisted on by each teacher. The god Indra is said to have thus studied for one hundred years under Prajāpati. In connection with these schools or *tols* arose the distinct literature which is now called *Brahmanas*, with which we have here to do.

The gods are now treated differently from what they were when the earlier hymns were composed. No respect is shown for their opinions or wills, or for their persons or characters. Incest, fraud, falsehood and dishonesty are attributed to them without hesitation. Indra prides himself in being guilty of such and such adventures and 'affairs.' Magic is mixed up largely with their religion, resulting to some extent from contact with the aboriginal tribes whom they had conquered, but much more to the change the religion was undergoing from internal sinister influences.

The sacrifice itself became in fact a piece of magic, rather than a divine offering. And hence their religious rites are prostituted for the most immoral purposes, for they are supposed to be all-powerful—more powerful than the mightiest of the gods. In fact whatever superiority the gods were supposed to have possessed over men, it was regarded as having arisen solely from the performance of rites, especially sacrifices. It was the performance of certain rites that gave sons and grandsons (the Indian's chief earthly desire); nay more, that caused the sun to rise in the east rather than in the west, that caused water to flow down the mountain rather than ascend to the hill-tops, and that caused certain animals to have bones, girls to be exposed to death, while boys were allowed to live, and that causes men to love cheerful women rather than ill-tempered ones. It was believed that by it the order of the world was sustained, the strength of the gods supported, and the course of nature directed. The sacramentarian theory, *ex opere operato*, is in the *Brahmanas* worked out to its utmost limits. The rite was to them an end in itself. Hence the least error in the form or sound of the mantra might prove fatal; but it seemingly mattered little or nothing whether he to whom or for whose benefit the rite was administered,



was good or bad, moral or immoral. The rites indeed are the real deities, almighty in themselves; and from them 'by sacrifices,' says the Taittiriya-brāhmana 'the gods obtained heaven.' And by the sacrifice of his body to Agni after or at death, every Hindu expects to follow them. The deities were born of the sacrifice and by it they lived.

All the worship is personal, that is, it is performed in the interests of some person who pays for the expense of it. In the older Brahmanas there is no reference to public temple, properly so called. The worship is solemnised in the open air. All worship is private property. It is not even domestic. The first living wife and dead ancestors may be included in it, but none other. Some rites were performed on a most extensive scale, compared even with those most wonderful Shraddas which are sometimes performed to the present day in Bengal. In certain cases the one sacrifice is said to have extended over many years. It goes without saying that such require elaborate preparation and entail enormous expense, when they extend only over a few weeks, not to speak of years. Open table had to be kept for all Brahmans who choose to come, alms to be given on a most extravagant scale, games organised, and gifts made of cattle, gold, silver, beds, various kinds of utensils, and garments.

## CHAPTER V.

### Human Sacrifices.

At some of these, animals were sacrificed in large numbers—so many that, in comparison with them, the hecatombs of ancient Greece and Rome appear insignificant. Sometimes, however, the animals were not really butchered, there being in later times only a symbolic sacrifice, as the cow is at present at the Hindu marriage feast. Of the fact that the cow was actually slaughtered and eaten at the great sacrifices described in the Brahmanas there can be no manner of doubt; but the embryo found in a sacrificed cow was regarded as not fit for sacrifice. Of this abundant evidence will be produced below.

In the Brahmanical worship of the time there were not only great sacrifices, of the chief ones of which we have account in the Brahmanas, but also such as are spoken of as 'domestic rites' described more fully in the *Grihya-Sutras*, works second in authority only to the Vedas. The name 'domestic rites' is however a misnomer, as these rites are really purely personal, none of them being properly public, social or domestic, in the strict sense of the term. The household did not join in them. The difference between them

and those of the Brahmanas was that they could be performed with one or two fires; while the latter required at least three.

A full account is also given in these Brāhmanas of the sacrifice of the horse; and the human sacrifice is referred to with "ominous frequency." M. Barth says that "all the great *Samayagas*, as a rule, exact one or more human victims;" and one of these is expressly called *purusha-medha* "sacrifice of man."\* He thinks that the Aryan Indians professed and practised human sacrifices from the remotest times down to the present century, "but only as a rite that was exceptional and reprobated."

Among the many sacrifices for which the Brahmanas make provision we fear we must thus include human sacrifices, and that too without the discovery of any reprobation of it. If we are to believe the representations given in the Brahmanas of the worship of the ancient Aryans of India, we must believe that there were occasions on which the sacrificial slaughter of their brothers of the human family formed part of that worship. The late Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra, C.I.E., himself a Hindu, has conclusively proved it from his study of the Brāhmanas, as well as from the other sacred books of the Hindus. It is true that both Colebrooke and Wilson came to the conclusion "that human sacrifices were not authorised by the Veda itself." On these words Dr. Mitra remarks "as a Hindu writing on the actions of my ancestors—remote though they are—it would have been a source of great satisfaction to me if I could adopt this conclusion as true; but I regret I cannot do so consistently with my allegiance to the cause of history." He then proceeds to quote chapter and verse from the Sanskrit originals, at the same time giving an English translation. We will confine ourselves to the proof as found in the Brahmanas.

We have first of all in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa the details of the story of Sunasēpha in which a Brahman sells one of his own sons to a rajah with the expressed intention that he be slain, and sacrificed as an offering to Varuna in the place of the rajah's own son who had been promised to the god. There is not a word in condemnation of the father for selling his son for such a purpose, nor of the princely purchaser for his part in the transaction. The story is related as if there had been nothing uncommon or unusual in this part of it. The unusual or extraordinary point of the story, because of which it is related, is the power or efficacy of the mantras, by the repeating of which the victim escaped death. We need not quote the story, as it is so well-known †

\* Barth's *Religions of India*, p. 58.

† It is quoted at length in Wilson's paper on the sacrifice of human beings as an element of the ancient Religion of India, Wilson's *Rig-Veda*, i, pp. 59 f., and by Max Müller in his *History of Ancient Sans. Lit.* pp. 408 ff. and given in translation by Dr. Haug, pp. 460 ff. See also Dr. Macdonald's *Vedic Religion*, 2nd Ed. pp. 88, 107.

It may be found with variations in the Ramayana and Mahabharat, both of which are now accessible to the English reader, and in the Bhagavata Purana. It is true that the details as found in all these, are not given in the hymns. When Colebrooke and Wilson deny that human sacrifices were authorised "in the Veda itself," they must mean the *hymns* of the Rig-Veda, in which there is a hymn clearly referring to the story, but so vaguely that it could not be said that it authorised human sacrifice. But it is altogether different with the Brahmanas in which the full details will be found and the clearest constructive authorization given. Dr. Mitra very truly remarks,—that in treating of the ancient religion of the Indo-Aryans "we cannot look to the Sanhitas apart from the Brāhmanas. What we call Ancient Hinduism is founded on the Brāhmanas, and cannot possibly be dissociated from it," as some of the modern Aryans of the Punjab attempt to do.

From this alone Dr. Mitra unhesitatingly concludes that "at any rate the story of Sunasepha must be accepted as a positive proof in favour of the theory that at the time of the Aitareya Brahmana, the Hindus did tolerate human sacrifice. To assume that the sacrifice referred to in it was a symbolical one, in which there was no intention whatever to make a sanguinary offering, would be totally to destroy the *raison d'être* of the legend, to divest it of all its sensational elements and to make it quite flat, stale and unprofitable. The great object of the legend, whether it be intrinsically true or false, was to extol the merits of the hymns in rescuing a victim from a sacrificial stake; but if the stake be divested of its horrors, that object would be entirely defeated."\*

An additional item of interest connected with the story is the fact that Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra, the writer, claims to be a descendant of this same Sunasepha. At every solemn ceremony in his large family, it is the custom for every member to be described as of the family of Sunasepha, otherwise known as Devarat. He is not, therefore, he adds, "prepared to say that Sunasepha is purely a mythical personage; and, seeing that until the beginning of this century, the practice of offering the first-born to the river Ganges was common, and the story simply says that Sunasepha was offered to the water god Varuna as a substitute for the first born Rohita, he can perceive nothing in it inconsistent or unworthy of belief."<sup>†</sup>

The following passage from the Satapatha Brahmana (i. 1. 4 14 ff.) concerning Manu and an Asura-slaying, enemy-slaying voice, leads to the same conclusion :—

"The voice departed out of it (the slaughtered bull) and entered into Manu's wife, Mānavī. Whenever they hear her speaking, the Asuras and Rākshasas continue to be destroyed in consequence of her voice. The Asuras said, 'She does us yet more mischief; for the human voice speaks more'

(than the bull). Kilāta and Akuli said, 'Manu is a devout believer: let us make trial of him. They came and said to him, Manu, let us sacrifice for thee.' 'With what victim?' he said. 'With this thy wife,' they replied. 'Be it so,' he answered. When she had been slaughtered the voice departed out of her and entered into the sacrifice and the sacrificial vessels.'

Another passage from the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa is referred to with the view of proving that human sacrifices had been put a stop to. It is a story built on the model of the "House that Jack built," as many of the folk-lore stories are.\* It tells in its own prolix way that the gods at one time killed a man for their sacrifice, but that part in him (the omentum or caul, we suppose) which was fit for being made an offering, went out, and entered a horse, then an ox, then a sheep, then a goat, (each being killed in its turn), then the earth; and the gods guarding the earth, seized the rice, the produce thereof, which, made into cakes, formed the best offering, and all the animals from which the sacrificial part had gone became unfit for being sacrificed and no one should eat them. The story, as thus literally interpreted, proves too much. It would prove that a stop was put, not to human sacrifices, but to the sacrifice of horses, oxen, sheep and goats, and that there were to be henceforth no sacrifices, except of rice cakes. But that would be absurd, for these Brāhmaṇas are full of the sacrifices of horses, cows, sheep and goats, and some of them have continued to be sacrificed down to the present day. How is the story to be understood? In the usual way in which Vedic eulogistic stories are—what is depreciative and prohibitive is simply padding of no value except to increase the eulogy. As Dr. Mitra observes—"In the Brāhmaṇas every rite, when being enjoined, is the best of rites, as in the Purāṇas every sacred pool is the holiest of the holy, and every god the greatest among gods; and as the object of the story was to praise the rice cakes, it at once made it supersede all other kinds of offering."

The word, *Puruṣa-medha*, literally means 'a human sacrifice,'

but it is not the common term under which

The *Puruṣa-Medha*.

all human sacrifices are treated of. It is a technical term, implying a specific ceremony, performed in the spring season. It has no relation to the sacrifice of children in redemption of vows, as was that of Sunasepha, and those at the mouth of the Ganges, finally put a stop to by the British Government. It was a sacrifice limited to Brahmins and Kshatriyas, for the attainment of supremacy over all created beings. It required 40 days for its performance, though only five were spoken of as those of the *Puruṣa-medha*, hence called *pañchāla*. Eleven sacrificial posts were required for it. To each of them was tied an animal (a barren cow) fit for Agni and Soma, the human victims being placed between the posts.

The rite is described in the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa of the Black

\* Haug, Vol. ii. p. 90. ff.

**Yajur Veda.** The peculiarity of it, as there described, is its naming a particular kind of a human being as a fit offering for as many as 179 different gods. It ought also to be noted that the story, as given in some authorities, does not supply the copula or connecting verb. Thus in the first verse we read in the Brāhmana before us the words—"To a divinity of the Brāhman caste a Brahman should be sacrificed (*ālabhate*)", in other authorities the word *ālabhate*, translated "should be sacrificed", is not supplied. But there can be no reasonable doubt that that word or its synonym is understood. As a literary curiosity, no unfair illustration of the literature we are considering, we give the extract in full.

"1. To a divinity of the Brahman caste a Brahman should be sacrificed (*ālabhate*); 2, to a divinity of the Kshatriya (caste), a Kshatriya; 3, to the Maruts, a Vaisya; 4, to Tapas (the divinity presiding over penances), a Sūdra; 5, to Tamas (the presiding divinity of darkness) a thief; 6, to Naraka (the divinity of hells), a Virahana (one who blows out sacrificial fires); 7, to Pāpman (the divinity of sins), a hermaphrodite (or a eunuch, 8, to Akrayi (the divinity of commerce), an Ayogu (one who acts against the ordinances of the Sāstra); 9, to Kāma (the divinity of love), a courtesan; 10, to Atikrushta (a detested divinity), a Māgadha (the son of a Vaisya by a Kshatriya woman).

11. To Gīta (the divinity of music), a Sūta or musician (the son of a Kshatriya by a Brāhman woman); 12, to Nritta (the divinity of dancing), one who lends his wife to another (a cuckold); 13, to Dharma (the divinity of duty), one who frequents assemblies and preaches morality; 14, to Narma (the divinity of humour), a wit; 15, to Narishta (a dependent goddess), a coward; 16, to Hasa (the divinity of laughter), a person of an ambling gait; 17, to Ananda (the divinity of delight), a favourite of women; 18, to Pramada (the divinity of joy), the son of an unmarried woman; 19, to Medhā (the goddess of intelligence), a coach-builder; 20, to Dhairya (the Divinity of patience), a carpenter (carver).

21. To Brama (the divinity of labour), the son of a potter; 22, to Māyā (the divinity who delights in art), a blacksmith; 23, to Rūpa (the divinity of beauty), a jeweller; 24, to the divinity of prosperity an agriculturist (sower of seeds, *vapa*); 25, to Saravyi (the divinity of arrows), an arrow-maker; 26, to Heti (the goddess of arms), a bow-maker; 27, to Karma (the divinity of art-work), a bowstring-maker; 28, to Dishta, a maker of ropes; 29, to Mṛityu (the divinity of death), a hunter; 30, to Antaka (the divinity of murder), a person delighting in hunting with dogs.

31. To Sandha (the divinity of assignation), a person given to adultery; 32, to Geha (the divinity of homesteads), one who lives in concubinage; 33, to Nirriti (the goddess of misfortune), one who has married before his elder brother; 34, to Arti (the goddess of pain), one who wishes to marry before his elder brother; 35, to Arādhi (the divinity who causes obstruction to enterprise), one who has married a widow; 36, to Pavitra (the divinity of purity), a physician; 37, to Prajnāna (the divinity of time), an astronomer; 38, to Niskṛiti (the goddess of success), the wife of a goldsmith; 39, to Bala, (the divinity of strength), a girl who is forcibly taken and kept as a concubine for food and raiment, but no pay; 40, to Varna (the divinity of colours), one who works for the sake of another, not for himself.

41. To the gods of rivers, a fisherman, (Paunjishta); 42, to the regents of lonely places, a Naishāda; 43, to the god who claims to be the noblest of males, an excessively vain man; 44, to the gods of heroes, an insane man; 45,

to the Gandharvas and their wives, one who has not been duly purified by the initiatory rites (a *Vrātya*); 46, to the regents of snakes, and snake-charmers, one unfit for the initiatory rites; 47, to the guardian gods, a gambler; 48, to *Iryatā*, (the goddess of food), one who abstains from gambling; 49, to the *Pisāchas*, a basket maker; 50, to the *Yātudhānas* (a race of demons), a gardener, or one who puts up a thorny hedge.

51. To those gods who frustrate undertakings, a hunchback; 52, to *Pramada* (the divinity of excessive joy), a dwarf; 53, to those goddesses who are the guardians of gates, a diseased person; 54, to the presiding divinity of dreams, a blind man; 55, to the divinity of sin, a deaf man; 56, to the divinity of sense, one who wins her husband's affection through charms or filters; 57, to the divinity of profuse talk, a bore; 58, to the goddess who is little conversant with the Vedas, a sceptic; 59, to her who is conversant with them, one who is proficient in questioning; 60, to her who presides over the purport of the Sastras, one who is able to meet arguments.

61. To the divinity of thieves, one proficient in thieving; 62, to one who prides in killing heroes, a tattler; 63, to one who presides on gains, a charioteer; 64, to the divinity who protects royal treasuries, a treasurer or revenue-collector; 65, to the mighty, a servant; 66, to the majestic, an officer or an assistant; 67, to the dear one, a sweet speaker; 68, to the uninjurious, a cavalier; 69, to the intelligent, or him who is proficient in a knowledge of religious rites, a washer-woman; 70, to the most loving, a female dyer.

71. To the refulgent, a collector of fuel; 72, to the highly refulgent, a fire-man, or lighter of fires; 73, to him who dwells on the top of heaven, one who officiates at a coronation; 74, to the regent of the region of the sun, a polisher of metal pots; 75, to him who prides himself on being of the region of the Devas, one who causes enmity; 76, to him who resides in the region of the mortals, one who foments quarrels among those who are in peace; 77, to those who belong to all regions, a peacemaker; 78, to him who presides over death by penance, one who meddles in quarrels; 79, to him who prides himself on being of heaven (*svarga*), one who collects the dues of a king from his subjects; 80, to the most aged of heaven, a tableservant.

81. To the wavy-mover, an elephant-keeper, or *māhut*; 82, to the swift, a groom; 83, to the robust, a cowherd; 84, to the vigorous, a goatherd; 85, to the energetic, a shepherd; 86, to the divinity of food, a ploughman; 87, to that of water, a distiller or vintner; 88, to that of welfare, householder; 89, to that of prosperity, an owner of wealth; 90, to him who is the immediate cause of all things, the servant of a charioteer, or an assistant charioteer.

91. To the mentally wrathful, a blacksmith, or one who works at a forge; 92, to the manifestly angry, one who leads a convict to execution; 93, to him who presides over griefs, a groom who runs before a chariot; 94, to the two who preside over gains above or below one's expectation (*Utkula* and *Vikula*), a cripple who cannot move even with the help of a crutch; 95, to him who presides over expected profits, one who harnesses a horse to a chariot; 96, to him who protects gains, one who unharnesses a horse; 97, to the portly-bodied, the son of one who is addicted to her toilet; 98, to him who presides over politeness, one who puts collyrium on his eyes; 99, to the divinity of sin, a maker of leather sheaths for swords; 100, to *Yama* (the destroyer of life), a barren woman.

101. To *Yami*, a mother of twins; 102, to the goddesses who preside over the mantras of the Atharva Veda, a woman who had aborted; 103, to the divinity of the first year of Jupiter's cycle, a woman who is confined long after due time; 104, to that of the second year of ditto, one who has not conceived for the second time; 105, to that of the third year of ditto, one who is able to bring on delivery before due time; 106, to that of the fourth

year of ditto, one who can delay delivery; 107, to that of the fifth year of ditto, one who becomes lean without delivery; 108, to one who produces a misleading impression of the world, a woman who appears old in her youth; 109, to the divinity of forests, a forest ranger or keeper; 110, to the divinity of a side forest, one who protects forests from fires.

111. To the divinities of lakes, a fisherman who catches fish both in water and also from the bank; 112, to those of ponds, one who catches fish with hooks; 113, to those of bays, (or streamless waters near woods,) one who earns his livelihood with a net; 114, to those female divinities who preside over waters amidst prairies, one who earns his livelihood with fishing-hooks; 115, to the divinity of the further bank, a Kaivarta, (or one who hunts fish from the banks); 116, to that of the near bank, a Mārgāra (or one who catches fish with his hands only); 117, to the divinities of fords, one who catches fish by putting up stakes in water; 118, to those who preside over other than fords, one who earns his livelihood by catching fish with nets; 119, to those who preside over sounding waters, one who catches fish by poisoning them with poisoned leaves placed in the water; 120, to those of caverns in mountains, a Kīrīta (or hunter); 121, to those of peaks of mountains, a Yambhaka; 122, to those mountains, a Kimpurusha.

123. To the divinity of echoes, a news-dealer; 124, to that of sounds, an incoherent speaker; 125, to that of fading sounds, one who speaks much; 126, to that of unending sound, a dumb person; 127, to that of loud sound, a player on the Vīṇā; 128, to that of musical sound, a player on the flute; 129, to that of all kinds of sounds, a trumpeter; 130, to that of sounds other than sweet, a blower of conch-shells; 131, to those who preside over the seasons, one whose profession is to collect fragments of skins; 132, to those of statesmanship, (or of time, place and opportunities, for peace negotiations), a preparer of musical instruments with leather.

133. To the goddess presiding over abhorrence, a (man of the) Paulkasa (caste); 134, to the goddess of affluence, one who is always careful or wakeful; 135, to that of indigence, a careless or sleepy person; 136, to that of scales (or weighing instruments), a purchaser; 137, to the god presiding over the radiance of jewels, a goldsmith; 138, to the Vis'vedevās a leper; 139, to the divinity of diseases other than leprosy, a naturally lean person; 140, to the goddess of motion, a scandal-monger; 141, to that of prosperity, one who is not impudent; 142, to the god of decay, one who splits wood (?).

143. To the divinity of mirth, a loose woman should be sacrificed; 144, to that of song, a player on the Vīṇā and a songster; 145, to that of aquatic animals a Sābulyā (one whose body is brindled, or has two colours, a piebald woman); 146, to that of congratulatory words, a woman of perfect form; 147, to that of dancing, one who plays on flutes, one who leads the octave in a chorus and one who beats time with his hands; 148, to that of manifest delight, one who invites people to a dance, or one who makes a sound to indicate the cessation of a dance; 149, to that of internal delight, one who plays on the *talava* (a musical instrument, probably the archetype of the modern *tablā*), or one who produces music from his mouth.

150. To the divinity of gambling with dice, a proficient gambler; 151, to that of the Kṛitā age, a keeper of a gambling hall; 152, to that of the Tretā age, a marker or reckoner at a gambling table; 153, to that of the Dvāparā age, one who is a spectator at a gambling table; 154, to that of the Kali age, one who does not leave a gambling hall even after the play has stopped; 155, to that of difficult enterprises, a teacher of gymnastics on the top of a bamboo; 156, to that of roads, a Brahmachāri; 157, to the Pis'achas, one who commits robberies on public highways and then hides himself in a mountain; 158, to the goddess of thirst, one who skins cattle; 159, to that

of sin, a cattle poisoner; 160, to that of hunger, a cow-butcher; 161, to the goddesses of hunger and thirst, one who lives by begging beef from a butcher.

162. To the divinity of land, a cripple who moves about on a crutch; 163, to that of fire, a Chandála; 164, to that of the sky, one whose profession is to dance on the top of a bamboo; 165, to that of the celestial region, a bald person; 166, to the presiding divinity of the sun, a green-eyed person; 167, to the presiding divinity of the moon, one who twinkles his eyes too frequently; 168, to the presiding divinity of the stars, one affected with white leprous blotches; 169, to that of day, an albino with tawny eyes; 170, to that of night, a black person with tawny eyes.

171. To the goddess of speech, a fat person; 172, to Vāyu, the five vital airs; prāna, apāna, vyāna, udāna and samāna, of that person; 173, to Sūrya should be immolated his eyes; 174, to Chandramā his mind; 175, to the regents of the quarters, his ears; 176, his life, to Prajāpati.

177. Now to ugly divinities should be immolated very short, very tall, very lean, very fat, very white, very dark, very smooth, very hairy, few-toothed, numerous-toothed, frequently-twinkling-eyed, and very glaring-eyed persons; 178, to the goddess for unattainable objects of hope, a woman who has passed the age for conception; 179, (and) to the goddess of hope for attainable objects, a virgin."—*Taittiriya-Brahmana*.

On the above Apastamba remarks:—"The Purusha-medha is penta-diurnal; a Brahman or a Kshatriya should celebrate it. He thereby acquires strength and vigour; he enjoys all fruition... Eleven animals should be tethered to eleven sacrificial posts and three oblations to Savitri having been offered with the (specified) mantra, on the middle day they should be sacrificed (or consecrated *upākṛita*). Having sacrificed thrice eleven men, reciting the (specified) mantra, the priest places the sacrificed victims between the sacrificial posts. The priest then placing himself on the south side, recites the hymn to the great male Nārāyaṇa, and then turning a burning brand round the victims, consigns them to the north; the other priests then offering an oblation with clarified butter to the presiding divinity, place them there."

Sāyana Achārya adds—"The human-formed animals, beginning with 'Brahman' and ending with 'virgin', should be immolated (*ālabdhavyāh*) along with the sacrificial animals on the middle day of the five days of this Purushamedha which is a kind of Somayāga."

Jaimini, the highest Hindu authority on the subject, and his commentator, Savara, explain that the sacrificial operations "of consecration, of bringing the animal to the place of sacrifice, fettering it, tying it to the post, slaughtering and cutting the carcass open for the distribution of the flesh among the priests are all implied when sacrifice is meant." No hint being given that the sacrifice was intended to be understood as symbolical only, the passage must be accepted as evidence that at that time and among the Taittiriyakins, it was a real sacrifice carried out in all its details. While on the other hand it must be admitted that at the time of the Satapatha Brahmana, some three or four hundred



years later, composed for a very different set or section of priests, the sacrifice had become symbolical and the victims were let off free ; as they generally are in the present day.

The following is the Satapatha Brahmana's description of the rite :—

1. "Verily the great male, Nārāyaṇa, willed : 'I shall abide over all living beings ; verily I shall become all this (creation).' He perceived this penta-diurnal sacrificial rite, Purushamedha. He collected it. With it he performed a sacrifice. Performing a sacrifice with it, he abode over all living beings, and became all this (creation). He abides over all living beings, and becomes all this, who performs a Purushamedha, as also he who knows all this.

2. "Of that rite there are twenty-three initiations (*dīkshā*), twelve benefactions (*upasada*), and five lustrations (*sutyā*), making altogether forty members (*gātra*). The forty comprising the initiations, benefactions &c., constitute the forty-syllabled *virāt*, (a form of metre) which assumes the form of Virāt, (the first male produced by Prājapati, and the father of mankind). Thus it is said ; 'Virāt, the first or superior male, was produced.' This is the same Virāt. From this Virāt is produced the male for sacrifice.

3. "Thereof these. There are four Dasats, and since there are four Dasats, they are the means for the attainment of the (different) regions and quarters (of the universe). This region (the earth) is the first to be attained by a Dasat ; the upper region the second ; the sky the third ; the quarters the fourth. Thus verily the institutor of the sacrifice attains this region through the first Dasat, the region of ether, through the second, the celestial region through the third, and the quarters through the fourth. Thus the Purushamedha is the means of attaining and subjugating all this—all these regions and all the quarters.

4. "For the initiation of this ceremony eleven animals, meet for Agni and Soma, (should be procured). For them there should be eleven sacrificia posts (*Yūpa*). Eleven syllables are comprised in the Trishtup metre ; the Trishtup is the thunderbolt,—it is vigour. With the thunderbolt and vigour of the Trishtup the institutor of the sacrifice destroys all the sin before him.

5. "In the rite of lustration there should be eleven victims. Eleven syllables are comprised in the Trishtup metre ; the Trishtup is the thunder bolt,—it is vigour. With the thunderbolt and vigour of the Trishtup the institutor of the sacrifice (Yajamāna) destroys the sin before him.

6. "Because the victims (in this sacrifice) are elevenfold, therefore verily all this (creation) elevenfold. Prājapati is elevenfold ; all this is verily Prājapati ; all this is the Purushamedha, which is the means for the attainment and subjugation of all this.

7. "That Purushamedha is verily penta-diurnal, and the greatest rite of sacrifice. Fivefold is Yajna ; fivefold are victims, or sacrificial animals five are the seasons included in the year. Whatever is fivefold in celestial or spiritual matter, the same may be obtained through this (rite).

8. "Thereof the Agnishtoma is the first day ; next the Ukthya ; the next Atirātra ; the next Ukthya ; the next Agnishtoma : thus it is hedged on either side by the Ukthya and the Agnishtoma.

9. "Yavamadhya are these five nights, [that is like a barley-coot stoutest in the middle and tapering on either side, meaning that the most important day is in the middle ; or as the commentator has it, the penance or gradually reducing the food and then again gradually increasing it, should be observed, so that on the third night there should be the smallest allowance

of food.] These regions are verily the Purushamedha; these regions have light on either side—Agni on this (side), and the sun on the other (side). In the same way it (the Purushamedha) has on either side, the food of light and the Ukthya. The soul is Atirātra; and since the Atirātra is hedged in on both sides by the two Ukthyas, therefore is the soul nourished by food. And since the thriving Atirātra is placed in the middle day, therefore is it Yamamadhya. He who engages in this rite has none to envy him, or to grow inimical to him. He who knows this suffers not from envy or enmity.

10. "Of that Purushamedha this region is the first-day. (Of this region the spring season (is the chief). That which is above this region, the etherial region, (*antariksha*) is the second day; of that the summer is the season. The etherial region is its third day. Of the etherial region the rainy and the autumn are the seasons. That which is above the etherial region, the sky, (*Diva*), is the fourth day; of it the dewy is the season. The heaven is its fifth day; of that heaven the winter is the season. This much is the celestial account of the Purushamedha.

11. "Now for its spiritual relations. Initiation (*Protishthā*) is its first day. Initiation is the spring season. That which is above it and below the middle is the second day; of that the summer is the season. The middle is the middle day. Of the middle day the rainy and the autumn are the seasons. That which is above the middle day and below the head or last day is the fourth day; thereof the dewy is the season. That which is the head is the fifth day; the season of this head is the winter. Thus verily these regions, the year, and the soul constituted the Purushamedha. All these regions, the whole year, the whole soul, the whole Purushamedha are for the attainment and subjugation of everything.

(Section 2.) 1. Now, whence the name Purushamedha? These regions verily are *Pur*, and He, the Purusha, who sanctifies this (*Pur*) sleeps (*seta*) in his abode (*Puri*) and hence is he named Purusha (*Puri* and *eete* = Purusha). To him belongs whatever food exists in these regions; that food is (called) *medha*; and since his food is *medha*, therefore is this Purushamedha. Now since in this (rite) purified males are sacrificed (*ālabhate*), therefore verily is this a Purushamedha.

2. These (males) verily are sacrificed (*ālabhate*) on the middle day. The etherial region is the middle day; the etherial region is verily the abiding place of all living beings. These animals are verily food; the middle day is the belly, and in that belly is that food deposited.

3. They are sacrificed by ten and ten. Ten syllables are comprised in each foot of the Virāt (metre); the Virāt is complete food, for the attainment of complete food.

4. Eleven tens are sacrificed. Eleven syllables are comprised in the Trishtup (metre); the Trishtup is the thunderbolt,—it is vigour. With the thunderbolt and vigour of the Trishtup, the institutor of the sacrifice destroys the sin within him (lit. in the middle).

5. "Forty-eight (animals) are sacrificed at the middle post. Forty-eight syllables are comprised in the Jagati (metre); the animals belong to the Jagati (metre); by the Jagati are animals bestowed on the Yajamāna.

6. "Eleven eleven at the other (posts). Eleven syllables are comprised in the Trishtup; the Trishtup is the thunderbolt—it is vigour. With the thunderbolt and vigour of the Trishtup should the institutor of the sacrifice destroy the sin around him.

7. "Eight best ones are sacrificed. Eight syllables are comprised in the Gāyatri (metre). The Gāyatri is Brahma. That Brahma consummates the well-being of all this. Therefore is Brahma said to be the best of all this.

8. "They (the sacrificial animals) belong to Prajāpati. Brahma is Prajāpati; Prajāpati belongs to Brahma; therefore do they (the animals) belong to Prajāpati.

9. "He (Prajāpati, i.e., Brahma, here meaning the priest so named) having sanctified the animals, offers, for the gratification of avitā, three oblations with the Sāvitrī verses beginning with *Deva savitus tatsavitur*, &c. He (Sāvitrī), gratified thereby, produces these men, therefore are these men sacrificed.

10. "A Brāhman is sacrificed to Brahma. Brahma is verily Brāhman; Brahma thrives through Brahmana. To the Kshatriya (divinity) a (person of the) Rājanya (caste), (should be sacrificed). The Kshatriya is verily Rājanya. The Kshatra thrives through a Kshatra. To the Maruts a Vais'ya (should be sacrificed). The Vis'a is the Maruts. The Vis'as thrive through the Vis'as. To Tapas (the presiding divinity of penances), S'ūdra (should be sacrificed). Tapas is verily S'ūdra. Tapas thrives through Tapases (works of penance). Even as these gods thrive through these animals (victims) so do they, thriving, cause the institutor of the sacrifice to thrive in all his wishes.

11. "Offers oblation with butter. The butter is verily vigour. Through that vigour, vigour is given to this (institutor of the sacrifice). Offerings are given with butter, which is the gods' most favourite glory; and since butter promotes their favourite glory, they, thriving, cause the institutor of the sacrifice to thrive in all his wishes.

12. "The persons appointed. The Brahmā, from the south, praises the great male Nārāyaṇa, with the sixteen Rik verses beginning with *Sahas ras'irsha*, &c. (the Purusha-sukta), for verily the whole of the Purushamedha is sixteen-membered for the attainment of everything, and for the subjugation of everything; and he is praised with the words 'Thus thou art, thus thou art.' In this way he is worshipped for certain. Now, as it is, this is said about it, the animals are consecrated by turning a flaming brand round them, but left unslaughtered" (*asanjñaptah*). [Kātyāyana explains that the Brāhmanas, &c., are let loose, like the *Kāpinjala* bird at the Asvamedha sacrifice.—*Kopinjālūdi-vadutsriyanti Brāhmanādin*; and his commentator adds, "after a flaming brand has been turned round them:" *paryagnikritānatsriyanti* *arthah*.

13. "About this; speech (*vāc*) uttered this; 'O male grieve not if you remain here; a male will eat a male.' Thus, those who have the flaming brand turned round them were let loose, oblations of butter are offered to the several divinities; and thereby were the divinities gratified; and thus gratified they confer all blessings on the worshipper." [Three oblations are offered to each of the divinities naming each, and followed by the word *svāhā*].

14. "He offers oblations with butter. Butter is vigour; by that vigour verily vigour abides in this (worshipper, Yajamāna).

15. "(This rite) is established (for the worshipper, Yajamāna,) by the eleven (animals). Eleven-syllabled is the Trishtup. The Trishtup is the thunderbolt,—it is vigour. Through the thunderbolt and vigour of the Trishtup, the Yajamāna destroys the sin within him.

16. "Abiding in the ceremony of Udayaniyā (Vide Asvalayāna Sūtra IV. 3. Kātyāyana VII, 1, 16.) eleven barren cows, such as are meet for Mitra, Varuna, the Visvedevas, and Vrihaspati, should be sacrificed (*dābhatē*) for the attainment of these deities, and since those for Vrihaspati are the last, Vrihaspati is the same with Brahma, and therefore the Yajamāna ultimately abides in Brahma," [Kātyāyana explains that three cows are to be slaughtered to Mitra and Varuna, three to the Visvedevas, and five to Vrihaspati].

17. "Now, why are there eleven? Eleven-syllabled is the Trishtup. The Trishtup is the thunderbolt,—it is vigour. By the thunderbolt and vigour of the Trishtup, the Yajamāna destroys the sin within him. Three-fold is the ceremony of Udavassāniya; (Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 8, 8,) it is a friend of the Yajamāna.

18. "Now for the fees (dakshinā). Wealth acquired from [a conquered] country, excluding land, and wealth taken from Brāhmins, but including men (slaves), (wealth from) the eastern side (of the kingdom), along with slaves (should be given) to the Hotā (or reciter of Rig mantras). (Wealth from) the southern side (with slaves) to the Brāhman (the director); (wealth from) the western side (with slaves) to the Adhvaryu (Yajur Vedic priest); (wealth from) the northern side (with slaves), to the Udgātā (or singer of the Sāma hymns). According to their dues to the Hotrikas, (or junior priests)."

[The ellipses have been supplied from the Sūtras of Kṛtyāyana by Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, as also the explanations within the square brackets.]

19. "Now, if a Brāhman performs the ceremony he should give (all his property) to the most learned. The Brahman includes everything; the knower of everything is included in everything; the Parushamedha includes everything; (and it is) for the attainment and subjugation of everything.

20. "Now, keeping to himself only his own self, and his (household) fire, and after praising the sun with the Uttara Nārāyaṇa hymn, looking at nothing, he should retire to a forest; thereby he separates himself from mankind. If he should like to dwell in a village, he should produce a fire by the rubbing of two sticks, and praising Aditya with the Uttara Nārāyaṇa hymn, return home, and there continue to perform the rites he was used to, and which he is able to perform. He verily should not speak with every body; to him the Purushamedha is everything, and therefore he should not speak to all (kinds of persons); to those only whom he knows, who are learned, and who are dear to him, he may speak; but not to all." *Sat. Br.\**

Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra contends that all must admit that the above is "a modification of a prior rite in which the human victims were wholly or in part immolated. No other theory can satisfactorily account for its peculiar character, and the way in which it justifies itself. Probably the number originally sacrificed was few, and that when the rite became emblematic, the number was increased in confirmation of some liturgical theory, particularly as it did not involve any trouble or difficulty. But whether so or not, certain it is that at one time or other men were immolated for the gratification of some divinity or other in this rite or its prototype."

Dr. Mitra is also of opinion,† and we doubt not other scholars support him, that in the times of the composition of the Hymns, the human sacrifice, or the purushamedha, was a real one, and that in the period of the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa it had been "divested of its hideousness and cruelty," and become emblematic. Dr. Mitra illustrates his position by the fact that the Vaishnavas of Bengal have, within the last five or six hundred years, replaced the sacrifice of goats and buffaloes, still given to Chandika or Kali by their co-religionists, by offerings of pumpkins and sugar-canes;

\* Indo-Aryans, Vol. ii. p. 101; also *Sat. Br.* vi. 2-1-2 ff.

† Do. Vol. ii. p. 102.